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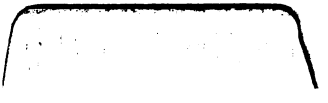

CŒLEBS

IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

COMPREHENDING

OBSERVATIONS

ON

DOMESTIC HABITS AND MANNERS, RELIGION AND MORALS.

Hannah More

For not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom. MILTON.

FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

WHEN I quitted home, on a little excursion in the spring of this present year 1808, a thought struck me, which I began to put into immediate execution. I determined to commit to paper any little circumstances that might arise, and any conversations in which I might be engaged, when the subject was at all important, though there might be nothing particularly new or interesting in the discussion itself.

I fulfilled my intention as occasions arose to furnish me with materials, and on my return to the North, in the autumn of this same year, it was my amusement on my journey to look over and arrange these papers.

As soon as I arrived at my native place, I lent my manuscript to a confidential friend, as the shortest way of imparting to him whatever had occurred to me during our separation, together with my reflections on those occurrences. I took care to keep his expectations low, by apprizing him, that in a tour from my own house in Westmoreland to the house of a friend in Hampshire, he must not look for adventures, but content himself with the every day details of common life, diversified only by the different habits and tempers of the persons with whom I had conversed.

He brought back my manuscript in a few days, with an earnest wish that I would consent to its publication, assuring me that he was of opinion it might not be altogether useless, not only to young men engaged in

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the same pursuit with myself, but to the general reader. He obviated all objections arising from my want of leisure, during my present interesting engagements, by offering to undertake the whole business himself, and to release me from any further trouble, as he was just setting out for London, where he proposed passing more time than the printing would require.

Thus I am driven to the stale apology for publishing what perhaps it would have been more prudent to have withheld—*the importunity of friends;* an apology so commonly unfounded, and so repeatedly alledged, from the days of John Faustus to the publication of Cœlebs.

But whether my friend, or my vanity, had the largest share of influence, I am willing to indulge the hope that a better motive than either friendship or vanity was an operating ingredient in my consent. Be that as it may—I sent him my copy "*with all its imperfections on its head.*" It was accompanied by a letter of which the following extract shall conclude these short prefatory remarks:

"I here send you my manuscript, with permission to make what use of it you please. By publishing it I fear you will draw on me the particular censure of two classes of critics. The novel reader will reject it as dull. The religious may throw it aside as frivolous. The one will accuse it of excessive strictness; the other of censurable levity. Readers of the former description must be satisfied with the following brief and general answer—

"Had it been my leading object to have indulged in details that have amusement only for their end, it might not have been difficult to have produced a work more acceptable to the tastes accustomed to be gratified with such compositions. But to entertain that description of readers makes no part of my design.

"The persons with whom I have associated in my excursion, were, principally, though not exclusively, the family of a country gentleman, and a few of his friends—a narrow field, and unproductive of much variety! The generality of these characters move in the quiet and regular course of domestic life. I found them placed in no difficult situations. It was a scene rather favourable to reflection than description. Social intercourse, and not striking events, marked the daily progress of my visit. I had little of pathetic scenes or trying circumstances to work on my own feelings, or, by the relation of them, to work on the feelings of others. My friend's house resembled the reign of some pacific sovereigns. It was the pleasantest to live in, but its annals were not the most splendid to record. The periods which make life happy do not always render history brilliant.

"Great passions, therefore, and great trials growing out of them, as I did not witness, I have not attempted to delineate. Love itself appears in these pages, not as an ungovernable impulse, but as a sentiment arising out of qualities calculated to inspire attachment in persons under the dominion of reason and religion, brought together by the ordinary course of occurrences, in a private family party.

"The familiar conversations of this little society comprehend a considerable portion of this slender work. The texture of the narrative is so slight, that it barely serves for a ground into which to weave the sentiments and observations which it was designed to introduce.

"It may not be unnecessary to anticipate an objection to which these conversations may sometimes be thought liable. In a few instances, the speeches may be charged with a degree of stiffness, and with a

length not altogether consistent with familiar dialogue. I must apologize for this by observing, that when the subjects were serious, the dialogue would not, in every instance, bend to such facilities, nor break into such small parcels, as may easily be effected in the discussion of topics of gayer intercourse.

"But it is time to meet the objections of the more pious reader, if any such should condescend to peruse this little performance. If it be objected, that religious characters have been too industriously brought forward, and their faults somewhat too severely treated, let it be remembered, that while it is one of the principal objects of the work to animadvert on those very faults, it has never been done with the insidious design of depreciating the religion, but with the view, by exposing the fault, to correct the practice. Grossly vicious characters have seldom come in my way, but I had frequent occasion to observe the different shapes and shades of error in various descriptions of society, not only in those worldly persons who do not quite leave religion out of their scheme, but on the mistakes and inconsistencies of better characters, and even on the errors of some who would be astonished not to find themselves reckoned altogether religious. I have not so much animadverted on the unavoidable faults and frailties inseparable from humanity, even in the best characters, and which the best characters most sensibly feel, and most feelingly deplore, as on those errors which are often tolerated, justified, and in some instances systematized.

"If I have been altogether deceived in the ambitious hope that these pages may not be entirely useless; if I have failed in my endeavours to shew how religion may be brought to mix with the concerns of ordinary life, without impairing its activity, lessening

its cheerfulness, or diminishing its usefulness; if I have erred in fancying that material defects exist in fashionable education; if I have been wrong in supposing that females of the higher class may combine more domestic knowledge with more intellectual acquirement, that they may be at the same time more knowing and more useful, than has always been thought necessary or compatible;—in short, if I shall be found to have totally disappointed you, my friend, in your too sanguine opinion that some little benefit might arise from the publication, I shall rest satisfied with a low and negative merit. I must be contented with the humble hope that no part of these volumes will be found injurious to the important interests, which it was rather in my wish, than in my ability to advance: that where I failed in effecting good, little evil has been done: that if my book has answered no valuable purpose, it has, at least, not added to the number of those publications, which, by impairing the virtue, have diminished the happiness of mankind: that if I possessed not talents to promote the cause of Christian morals, I possessed an abhorrence of those principles which lead to their contamination.

"CŒLEBS."

CŒLEBS.

CHAP. I.

I HAVE been sometimes surprised when in conversation I have been expressing my admiration of the character of Eve in her state of innocence, as drawn by our immortal poet, to hear objections started by those, from whom of all critics I should have least expected it—the ladies. I confess that as the Sophia of Rousseau had her young imagination captivated by the character of Fenelon's Telemachus, so I early became enamoured of that of Milton's Eve. I never formed an idea of conjugal happiness, but my mind involuntarily adverted to the graces of that finished picture.

The ladies, in order to justify their censure, assert that Milton, a harsh domestic tyrant, must needs be a very inadequate judge, and of course a very unfair delineator, of female accomplishments. These fair cavillers draw their inference from premises, from which I have always been accustomed to deduce a directly contrary conclusion. They insist that it is highly derogatory from the dignity of the sex, that the poet should affirm, that it is the perfection of the character of a wife,

"To study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote."

Now according to my notion of "household good," which does not include one idea of drudgery or servility, but which involves a large and comprehensive scheme of excellence, I will venture to affirm, that let a woman know what she may, yet if she knows not this, she is ignorant of the most indispensable, the most appropriate branch of female knowledge. Without it, however she may inspire admiration abroad, she will never excite esteem, nor of course durable affection, at home, and will bring neither credit nor comfort to her ill-starred partner.

The domestic arrangements of such a woman as filled the capacious mind of the poet, resemble, if I may say it without profaneness, those of Providence, whose under-agent she was. Her wisdom is seen in its effects. Indeed it is rather felt than seen. It is sensibly acknowledged in the peace, the happiness, the virtue of the component parts; in the order, regularity and beauty of the whole system, of which she is the moving spring. The perfection of her character, as the divine poet intimates, does not arise from a prominent quality, or a shewy talent, or a brilliant accomplishment; but it is the beautiful combination and result of them all. Her excellences consist not so much in acts as in habits, in

Those thousand decencies which daily flow
From all her words and actions.

A description more calculated than any I ever met with, to convey an idea of the purest conduct resulting from the best principles. It gives an image of that tranquillity, smoothness, and quiet beauty, which is of the very essence of perfection in a wife; while

the happily chosen verb *flow* takes away any impression of dullness, or stagnant torpor, which the *still* idea might otherwise suggest.

But the offence taken by the ladies against this uncourtly bard, is chiefly occasioned by his having presumed to intimate that conjugal obedience

Is woman's highest honour and her praise.

This is so nice a point, that I, as a bachelor, dare only just hint, that on this delicate question the poet has not gone an inch farther than the apostle. Nay, Paul is still more uncivilly explicit than Milton. If, however, I could hope to bring over to my side critics, who, being of the party, are too apt to prejudge the cause, I would point out to them, that the supposed harshness of the observation is quite done away by the recollection that this scrupled "obedience" is so far from implying degradation, that it is connected with the injunction to the woman "to promote good works" in her husband; an injunction surely inferring a degree of influence that raises her condition, and restores her to all the dignity of equality; it makes her not only the associate, but the inspirer of his virtues.

But to return to the economical part of the character of Eve. And here she exhibits a consummate specimen and beautiful model of domestic skill and elegance. How exquisitely conceived is her reception and entertainment of Raphael! How modest, and yet how dignified! A am afraid I know some husbands who would have had to encounter very ungracious looks, not to say words, if they had brought home even an angel, *unexpectedly* to dinner. Not so our general mother.

"Her dispatchful looks,"
Her hospitable thoughts,——intent
What *choice* to *chuse* for delicacy best,

all indicate not only the "prompt," but the cheerful "obedience." Though her repast consisted only of the fruits of paradise,

> Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields;

Yet of these, with a liberal hospitality,

> She gathers tribute large, and on the board
> Heaps with unsparing hand.

The finest modern lady need not disdain the arrangement of her table, which was

> So contrived as not to mix
> Tastes not well join'd, inelegant, but bring
> Taste after taste, upheld by kindliest change.

It must, however, I fear, be conceded, by the way, that this "taste *after* taste" rather holds out an encouragement to second courses.

When this unmatched trio had finished their repast, which, let it be observed, before they tasted, Adam acknowledged that

> These bounties from our *Nourisher* are given,
> From whom all perfect good descends,

Milton, with great liberality to that sex against which he is accused of so much severity, obligingly permitted Eve to sit much longer after dinner, than most modern husbands would allow. She had attentively listened to all the historical and moral subjects so divinely discussed between the first Angel and the first Man; and perhaps there can scarcely be found a more beautiful trait of a delicately attentive wife, than she exhibits, by withdrawing at the exact point of propriety. She does not retire in consequence of any look or gesture, any broad sign of impatience, much less any command or intimation of her hus-

band; but with the ever watchful eye of vigilant affection and deep humility:

> When by his countenance he seemed
> Entering on thoughts abstruse,

instructed only by her own quick intuition of what was right and delicate, she withdrew. And here again how admirably does the poet sustain her intellectual dignity, softened by a most tender stroke of conjugal affection.

> Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
> Delighted, or not capable her ear
> Of what was high—such pleasure she reserved,
> Adam relating, she sole auditress——

On perusing, however, the tête-a-tête which her absence occasioned, methinks I hear some sprightly lady, fresh from the Royal Institution, express her wonder why Eve should be banished by her husband from Raphael's fine lecture on astronomy, which follows: was not she as capable as Adam of understanding all he said, of

> Cycle and Epicycle, Orb on Orb?

If, however, the imaginary fair objector will take the trouble to read to the end of the eighth book of this immortal work, it will raise in her estimation both the poet and the heroine, when she contemplates the just propriety of her being absent before Adam enters on the account of the formation, beauty, and attractions of his wife, and of his own love and admiration. She will farther observe, in her progress through this divine poem, that the author is so far from making Eve a mere domestic drudge, an unpolished housewife, that he pays an invariable attention even to external elegance, in his whole delinea-

tion, ascribing grace to her steps, and dignity to her gesture. He uniformly keeps up the same combination of intellectual worth and polished manners;

> For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.

And her husband, so far from a churlish insensibility to her perfections, politely calls her

> Daughter of God and man, *accomplished* Eve.

I will not, however, affirm that Adam, or even Milton, annexed to the term *accomplished* precisely the idea with which it is associated in the mind of a true modern-bred lady.

It be objected to the poet's gallantry, that he remarks,

> How beauty is excelled by manly grace,
> And wisdom, which alone is truly fair;

let it be remembered that the observation proceeds from the lips of Eve herself, and thus adds to her other graces, the crowning grace of humility.

But it is high time that I should proceed from my criticism to myself. The connection, and of course the transition, will be found more natural than may appear, till developed by my slight narrative.

CHAP. II.

I AM a young man, not quite four and twenty, of an ancient and respectable family, and considerable estate in one of the northern counties. Soon after I had completed my studies in the university of Edinburgh, my father fell into a lingering illness. I attended him with an assiduity which was richly rewarded by the lessons of wisdom, and the example of piety, which I daily received from him. After languishing about a year, I lost him, and in him the most affectionate father, the most enlightened companion, and the most christian friend.

The grief of my mother was so poignant, and so lasting, that I could never prevail on myself to leave her, even for the sake of attaining those advantages, and enjoying those pleasures, which may be reaped by a wider range of observation, by a more extended survey of the multifarious tastes, habits, pursuits, and characters of general society. I felt with Mr. Gray that we can never have but one mother, and postponed from time to time the moment of leaving home.

I was her only child, and though it was now her sole remaining wish to see me happily married, yet I was desirous of first putting myself in a situation which might afford me a more extensive field of enquiry, before I ventured to take so irretrievable a step, a step which might perhaps affect my happiness in both worlds. But time did not hang heavy on my hands; if I had little society, I had many books. My father had left me a copious library, and I had learnt from him to select whatever was most valuable in that

best species of literature, which tends to form the principles, the understanding, the taste, and the character. My father had passed the early part of his life in the gay and busy world; and our domestic society in the country had been occasionally enlivened by visits from some of his London friends, men of sense and learning, and some of them men of piety.

My mother, when she was in tolerable spirits, was now frequently describing the kind of woman whom she wished me to marry. "I am so firmly persuaded, Charles," would she kindly say, "of the justness of your taste, and the rectitude of your principles, that I am not much afraid of your being misled by the captivating exterior of any woman who is greatly deficient either in sense or conduct; but remember, my son, that there are many women against whose characters there lies nothing very objectionable, who are yet little calculated to taste, or to communicate rational happiness. Do not indulge romantic ideas of super-human excellence. Remember that the fairest creature is a fallen creature. Yet let not your standard be low. If it be absurd to expect perfection, it is not unreasonable to expect *consistency*. Do not suffer yourself to be caught by a shining quality, till you know it is not counteracted by the opposite defect. Be not taken in by strictness in one point, till you are assured there is no laxity in others. In character, as in architecture, proportion is beauty. The education of the present race of females is not very favourable to domestic happiness. For my own part I call education, not that which smothers a woman with accomplishments, but that which tends to consolidate a firm and regular system of character; that which tends to form a friend, a companion, and a wife. I call education, not that which is made up of the shreds and

patches of useless arts, but that which inculcates principles, polishes taste, regulates temper, cultivates reason, subdues the passions, directs the feelings, habituates to reflection, trains to self-denial, and, more especially, that which refers all actions, feelings, sentiments, tastes, and passions, to the love and fear of God."

I had yet had little opportunity of contrasting the charms of my native place with the less wild and romantic beauties of the south. I was passionately fond of the scenery that surrounded me, which had never yet lost that power of pleasing, which it is commonly imagined that novelty can alone confer.

The Priory, a handsome Gothic mansion, stands in the middle of a park, not extensive, but beautifully varied. Behind are lofty mountains, the feet of which are covered with wood that descends almost to the house. On one side a narrow cultivated valley winds among the mountains; the bright variegated tints of its meadows and corn fields, with here and there a little white cottage, embosomed in trees, are finely contrasted with the awful and impassible fells which contain it.

An inconsiderable but impetuous river rushes from the mountains above, through this unadorned but enchanting little valley, and passes through the Park at the distance of about a hundred yards from the house. The ground falls beautifully down to it; and on the other side is a fine wood of birch overhanging the river, which is here crossed by a small rustic bridge: after being enlarged by many streams from the neighbouring hills, it runs about half a mile to the lake below, which, from the front of the house, is seen in full beauty. It is a noble expanse of water. The mountains that surround it are some of them

covered with wood, some skirted with cultivation, some rocky and barren to the water's edge; while the rugged summits of them all present every variety of fantastic outline. Towards the head of the lake a neat little village ornaments the banks, and wonderfully harmonizes with the simple beauty of the scene. At an opening among the hills, a view is caught of the distant country, a wide vale richly wooded, adorned every where with towns, villages, and gentlemen's houses, and backed by sublime mountains, rivalling in height, though not in their broken and Alpine forms, those that more immediately surround us.

While I was thus dividing my time between the enjoyment of this exquisite scenery, my books, the care of my affairs, my filial attentions, and my religious duties, I was suddenly deprived of my inestimable mother. She died the death of the righteous.

Addison has finely touched on the singular sort of delicate and refined tenderness of a father for a daughter: but I am persuaded that there is no affection in the human heart more exquisitely pure than that which is felt by a grateful son towards a mother who fostered his infancy with fondness, watched over his childhood with anxiety, and his youth with an interest compounded of all that is tender, wise, and pious.

My retirement was now become solitude; the former is, I believe, the best state for the mind of man, the latter almost the worst. In complete solitude the eye wants objects, the heart wants attachments, the understanding wants reciprocation. The disposition loses its tenderness when it has nothing to love, its firmness when it has none to strengthen it, its watchfulness when it has nothing to soothe it, its humility when it meets no contradiction, its humility when it is surrounded by dependants, and its delicacy

conversation of the uninformed. Where the intercourse is very unequal, society is somewhat worse than solitude.

I had naturally a keen relish for domestic happiness; and this propensity had been cherished by what I had seen and enjoyed in my father's family. Home was the scene in which my imagination had pictured the only delights worthy of a rational, feeling, intellectual, immortal man;

> sole bliss of Paradise
> Which has surviv'd the fall.

This inclination had been much increased by my father's turn of conversation. He often said to me, "I know your domestic propensities; and I know, therefore, that the whole colour of your future life will be, in a particular manner, determined by the turn of mind of the woman you may marry. Were you to live in the busy haunts of men; were you of any profession, or likely to be engaged in public life, though I would still counsel you to be equally careful in your choice, yet your happiness would not so immediately, so exclusively depend on the individual society of a woman, as that of a retired country gentleman must do. A man of sense, who loves home, and lives at home, requires a wife who can and will be at half the expence of mind necessary for keeping up the cheerful, animated, elegant intercourse which forms so great a part of the bond of union between intellectual and well-bred persons. Had your mother been a woman of an uninformed, inelegant mind, virtuous and pious as she is, what abatement must there have been in the blessings of my lot! The *exhibiting*, the *displaying* wife may entertain your company, but it is only the informed, the refined, the cultivated

woman who can entertain yourself; and I presume whenever you marry you will marry primarily for yourself, and not for your friends: you will want a COMPANION: an ARTIST you may hire.

"But remember, Charles, that when I am insisting so much on mental delicacy, I am assuming that all is right in still more essential points. Do not be contented with this superstructure, till you have ascertained the solidity of the foundation. The ornaments which decorate, do not support the edifice! Guarded as you are by christian principles, and confirmed in virtuous habits, I trust you may safely look abroad into the world. Do not, however, irrevocably dispose of your affections till you have made the long-promised visit to my earliest, wisest, and best friend, Mr. Stanley. I am far from desiring that your friend should direct your choice. It is what even your father would not do: but he will be the most faithful and most disinterested of counsellors."

I resolved now for a few months to leave the prio the seat of my ancestors, to make a tour not onl London, but to Stanley Grove, in Hampshire, th sidence of my father's friend; a visit I was abo make with him just before his last illness. He wi me to go alone, but I could not prevail on mys desert his sick-bed for any scheme of amusemen

I began to long earnestly for the pleasures o versation, pleasures which, in our small, but and select circle of cultivated friends, I had b customed to enjoy. I am aware that certain fi bred men would ridicule the bare mention o and polished conversation at a village in W land, or indeed at any place out of the preci metropolis; just as a London physician, smiles superciliously at the suggested mer

fessional brother in a provincial town. Good sense, however, is of all countries, and even knowledge is not altogether a mere local advantage. These, and not the topics of the hour, furnish the best raw materials for working up an improving intercourse.

It must be confessed, however, as I have since found, that for giving a terseness and a polish to conversation; for rubbing out prejudices; for correcting egotism; for keeping self-importance out of sight, if not curing it; for bringing a man to condense what he has to say, if he intends to be listened to; for accustoming him to endure opposition; for teaching him not to think every man who differs from him in matters of taste, a fool, and in politics, a knave; for cutting down harangues; for guarding him from producing as novelties and inventions, what has been said a thousand times; for quickness of allusion, which brings the idea before you without detail or quotation; nothing is equal to the miscellaneous society of London. The advantages too which it possesses, in being the seat of the court, the parliament, and the courts of law, as well as the common centre of arts and talents of every kind, all these raise it above every other scene of intellectual improvement, or colloquial pleasure, perhaps in the whole world.

But this was only the secondary motive of my intended migration. I connected with it the hope, that, in a more extended survey, I might be more likely to select a deserving companion for life. "In such a companion," said I, as I drove along in my post chaise, "I do not want a Helen, a Saint Cecilia, or a Madame Dacier; yet she must be elegant, or I should not love her; sensible, or I should not respect her; prudent, or I could not confide in her; well informed, or she could not educate my children; well-bred, or

she could not entertain my friends; *consistent*, or I should offend the shade of my mother; pious, or I should not be happy with her, because the prime comfort in a companion for life is the delightful hope that she will be a companion for eternity."

After this soliloquy, I was frightened to reflect that so much was requisite; and yet when I began to consider in which article I could make any abatement, I was willing to persuade myself that my requisitions were moderate.

CHAP. III.

HAD occasionally visited two or three families
ur own county, who were said to make a very
eel appearance on narrow fortunes. As I was
vn not to consider money as a principal consider-
, it had often been intimated to me what excel-
wives the daughters of these families would make,
use on a very slender allowance their appearance
as elegant as that of women of ten times their ex-
tations. I translated this respectable appearance
a language not the most favorable, as I instantly
rred, and afterwards was convinced, that this per-
l figure was made by the sacrifice of their whole
e to those decorations which procured them cre-
by putting their outward figure on a par with the
t affluent. If a girl with a thousand pounds rivals
er dress one with ten thousand, is it not obvious,
not only all her time must be employed, but all
money devoted to this one object? Nothing but
clippings and parings from her personal adorn-
nts could enable her to supply the demands of
rity; and these sacrifices, it is evident, she is
disposed to make.

Another inducement suggested to me was, that
se young ladies would make the better wives, be-
se they had never been corrupted by the expen-
e pleasures of London, and had not been spoilt by
gay scenes of dissipation which it afforded. This
ument would have weighed powerfully with me,
I not observed, that they never abstained from

any amusement in the country that came within t reach.

I naturally inferred, that she who eagerly gra at every petty provincial dissipation, would with creased alacrity have plunged into the more allu gaities of the metropolis had it been in her power thought she had even less apology to plead than town lady; the fault was equal, while the tempta was less: and she who was as dissipated as her lim bounds permitted, where there was little to att would, I feared, be as dissipated as she possibly c be, when her temptations were multiplied, and facilities increased.

I had met with several young ladies of a higher scription, daughters of our country gentlemen class which furnishes a number of valuable and gant women. Some of these, whom I knew, se ed unexceptionable in manner and in mind. T had seen something of the world, without having spoilt by it; had read with advantage; and acqu themselves well in the duties which they had called to practise. But I was withheld from cu ing that degree of intimacy which would hav bled me to take an exact measure of their min the injunction of my father, that I would n tach myself to any woman till I had seen and ed Mr. Stanley. This direction, which, like wishes, was a law to me, operated as a sort five in the slight intercourse I had had with and resolving to postpone all such intimacy have led to attachment, I did not allow mysel near enough to feel with interest, or to ju decision.

As soon as I got to town I visited some ther's friends. I was kindly received for

and at their houses soon enlarged the sphere of my acquaintance. I was concerned to remark that two or three gentlemen, whom I had observed to be very regular in their attendance on public worship in the country, seldom went to church in London; in the afternoon never. "Religion," they said, by way of apology, "was entirely a thing of example, it was of great political importance; society was held together by the restraints it imposed on the lower orders. When they were in the country it was highly proper that their tenants and workmen should have the benefit of their example, but in London the case was different. Where there were so many churches, no one knew whether you went or not, and where no scandal was given, no harm was done." As this was a logic which had not found its way into my father's religion, I was not convinced by it. I remember Mr. Burke, speaking of the English, who were so humane at home, and whom he unjustly accused of wanting humanity in India, says, "that the humanity of Britain is a humanity of points and parallels." Surely the religion of the gentlemen in question is not less a geographical distinction.

This error, I conceive, arises from religion being too much considered as a mere institution of decorum, of convention, of society; and not as an institution founded on the condition of human nature, a covenant of mercy for repairing the evils which sin has produced. It springs from the want of a conviction that christianity is an individual as well as general concern; that religion is a personal thing, previous to its being a matter of example; that a man is not infallibly saved or lost as a portion of any family, or any church, or any community; but that, as he is individually responsible, he must be individually

brought to a deep and humbling sense of his own personal wants, without taking any refuge in the piety he may see around him, of which he will have no benefit, if he be no partaker.

I regretted, even for inferior reasons, the little distinction which was paid to this sacred day. To say nothing of the elevating views which the soul acquires from devoting itself to its proper object; the man of business, methinks, should rejoice in its return; the politician should welcome its appearance, not only as a rest from anxiety and labour, but as an occasion of cooling and quieting the mind, of softening its irritation, of allaying its ferment, and thus restoring the repaired faculties and invigorated spirits to the demands of the succeeding week, in a frame of increased aptitude for meeting its difficulties and encountering its duties.

The first person whom I visited was a good natured, friendly man, whom I had occasionally seen in the North. As I had no reason to believe that he was religious, in the true sense of the word, I had no intention of looking for a wife in his family. I, however, thought it not a miss to associate a little with persons of different descriptions, that by a wider range I might learn to correct my general judgment, as well as to guide my particular pursuit. Nothing it is true would tempt me to select a woman on whose pious dispositions I could not form a reasonable dependence: yet to come at the reality of those dispositions was no easy matter.

I had heard my father remark, that he had, more than once, known a right-minded girl, who seemed to have been first taught of heaven, and afterwards supported in her Christian course under almost every human disadvantage; who boldly, but meekly, main-

tained her own principles, under all the hourly temptations and opposition of a worldly and irreligious family, and who had given the best evidence of her piety towards God, by her patient forbearance towards her erring friends. Such women had made admirable wives when they were afterwards transplanted into families where their virtues were understood, and their piety cherished. While, on the other hand, he had known others, who accustomed from childhood to the sober habits of family religion, under pious but injudicious parents, had fallen in mechanically with the domestic practices, without having ever been instructed in Christian principles, or having ever manifested any religious tendencies. The implantation of a new principle never having been inculcated, the religious habit has degenerated into a mere form, the parents acting as if they thought that religion must come by nature or infection in a religious family. These girls, having never had their own hearts impressed, nor their own characters distinctly considered, nor individually cultivated, but being taken out as a portion from the mass, have afterwards taken the cast and colour of any society into which they have happened to be thrown; and they who before had lived religiously with the religious, have afterwards assimilated with the gay and dissipated, when thus thrown into their company, as cordially as if they had never been habituated to better things.

At dinner there appeared two pretty looking young ladies, daughters of my friend, who had been some time a widower. I placed myself between them, for the purpose of prying a little into their minds, while the rest of the company were conversing on indifferent subjects. Having formerly heard this gen-

tleman's deceased wife extolled as the mirror of managers, and the arrangements of his table highly commended, I was surprized to see it so ill appointed, and every thing wearing marks of palpable inelegance. Though no epicure, I could not forbear observing that many of the dishes were out of season, ill chosen and ill dressed.

While I was puzzling my head for a solution, I recollected that I had lately read in a most respectable periodical work, a paper (composed, I believe, however by a raw recruit of that well disciplined corps) which insisted that nothing tended to make the ladies so useless and inefficient in the *menage* as the study of the dead languages. I jumped to the conclusion, and was in an instant persuaded that my young hostesses must not only be perfect mistresses of Latin, but the *tout ensemble* was so ill arranged as to induce me to give them full credit for Greek also.

Finding, therefore, that my appetite was baulked, I took comfort in the certainty that my understanding would be well regaled; and after secretly regretting that learning should so effectually destroy usefulness, I was resolved to derive intellectual comfort from this too classical repast. Turning suddenly to the eldest lady, I asked her at once if she did not think Virgil the finest poet in the world. She blushed, and thus confirmed me in the opinion that her modesty was equal to her erudition. I repeated my question with a little circumlocution. She stared and said she had never heard of the person I mentioned, but that she had read Tears of Sensibility, and Rosa Matilda, and Sympathy of Souls, and Too Civil by Half, and the Sorrows of Werter, and the Stranger, and the Orphans of Snowdon.

"Yes, sir," joined in the younger sister, who did

not rise to so high a pitch of literature, "and we have read Perfidy Punished, and Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy, and the Fortunate Footman, and the illustrious Chambermaid." I blushed and stared in my turn; and here the conversation, through the difficulty of our being intelligible to each other, dropped; and I am persuaded that I sunk much lower in their esteem for not being acquainted with their favorite authors, than they did in mine for never having heard of Virgil.

I arose from the table with a full conviction that it is very possible for a woman to be totally ignorant of the ordinary but indispensable duties of common life without knowing one word of Latin; and that her being a bad companion is no infallible proof of her being a good economist.

I am afraid the poor father saw something of my disappointment in my countenance, for when we were alone in the evening, he observed, that a heavy addition to his other causes of regret for the loss of his wife, was her excellent management of his family. I found afterwards that, though she had brought him a great fortune, she had a very low education. Her father, a coarse country esquire, to whom the pleasures of the table were the only pleasures for which he had any relish, had no other ambition for his daughter but that she should be the most famous housewife in the country. He gloried in her culinary perfections, which he understood; of the deficiencies of her mind he had not the least perception. Money and good eating, he owned, were the only things in life which had a real intrinsic value; the value of all other things, he declared, existed in the imagination only.

The poor lady, when she became a mother, and was brought out into the world, felt keenly the defi-

ciencies of her own education. The dread of Scylla, as is usual, wrecked her on Charybdis. Her first resolution, as soon as she had daughters, was that they should *learn every thing*. All the masters who teach things of little intrinsic use were extravagantly paid for supernumerary attendance; and as no one in the family was capable of judging of their improvements, their progress was but slow.—Though they were taught much, they learnt but little, even of these unnecessary things; and of things necessary they learnt nothing. Their well-intentioned mother was not aware that her daughters' education was almost as much calculated to gratify the senses, though in a different way, and with more apparent refinement, as her own had been; and that *mind* is left nearly as much out of the question in making an ordinary artist as in making a good cook.

CHAP. IV.

FROM my fondness for conversation, my imagination had been early fired with Dr. Johnson's remark, that there is no pleasure on earth comparable to the *fine full flow of London talk*. I, who, since I had quitted college, had seldom had my mind refreshed, but with the petty rills and penurious streams of knowledge which country society afforded, now expected to meet it in a strong and rapid current, fertilizing wherever it flowed, producing in abundance the rich fruits of argument, and the gay flowers of rhetoric. I looked for an uninterrupted course of profit and delight. I flattered myself that every dinner would add to my stock of images; that every debate would clear up some difficulty, every discussion elucidate some truth; that every allusion would be purely classical, every sentence abound with instruction, and every period be pointed with wit.

On the tiptoe of expectation I went to dine with Sir John Belfield, in Cavendish-square. I looked at my watch fifty times. I thought it would never be six oclock. I did not care to shew my country breeding, by going too early, to incommode my friend, nor my town breeding, by going too late, and spoiling his dinner. Sir John is a valuable, elegant-minded man, and, next to Mr. Stanley, stood highest in my father's esteem for his mental accomplishments and correct morals. As I knew he was remarkable for assembling at his table men of sense, taste, and learning, my expectations of pleasure were very high. "Here at least," said I, as I heard the name of one clever

man announced after another, "here, at least, I cannot fail to find

The feast of reason and the flow of soul:

Here at least all the energies of my mind will be brought into exercise. From this society I shall carry away documents for the improvement of my taste; I shall treasure up hints to enrich my understanding, and collect aphorisms for the conduct of life."

At first there was no fair opportunity to introduce any conversation beyond the topics of the day, and to those, it must be confessed, this eventful period gives a new and powerful interest. I should have been much pleased to have had my country politics rectified, and any prejudices, which I might have contracted, removed, or softened, could the discussion have been carried on without the frequent interruption of the youngest man in the company. This gentleman broke in on every remark, by descanting successively on the merits of the various dishes; and, if it be true that experience only can determine the judgment, he gave proof of that best right to peremptory decision, by not trusting to delusive theory, but by actually eating of every dish at table.

His animadversions were uttered with the gravity of a German philosopher, and the science of a French cook. If any of his opinions happened to be controverted, he quoted, in confirmation of his own judgment, *l'Almanac des Gourmands*, which he assured us was the most valuable work that had appeared in France since the revolution. The author of this book he seemed to consider of as high authority in the science of eating, as Coke or Hale in that of jurisprudence, or Quintilian in the art of criticism. To the

credit of the company, however, be it spoken, he had the whole of this topic to himself. The rest of the party were, in general, of quite a different calibre, and as little acquainted with his favourite author, as he probably was with theirs.

The lady of the house was perfectly amiable and well bred. Her dinner was excellent; and every thing about her had an air of elegance and splendour: of course she completely escaped the disgrace of being thought a scholar, but not the suspicion of having a very good taste. I longed for the removal of the cloth, and was eagerly anticipating the pleasure and improvement which awaited me.

As soon as the servants were beginning to withdraw, we got into a sort of attitude of conversation; all except the eulogist of l'Almanac des Gourmands, who, wrapping himself up in the comfortable consciousness of his own superior judgment, and a little piqued that he had found neither support nor opposition, (the next best thing to a professed talker,) he seemed to have a perfect indifference to all topics except that on which he had shewn so much eloquence with so little effect.

The last tray was now carried out, the last lingering servant had retired. I was beginning to listen with all my powers of attention to an ingenious gentleman who was about to give an interesting account of Egypt, where he had spent a year, and from whence he was lately returned. He was just got to the catacombs,

> when on a sudden open fly,
> With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,

the mahogany folding doors, and in at once, struggling who should be first, rushed half a dozen children, lovely, fresh, gay, and noisy. This sudden and vio-

lent irruption of the pretty barbarians necessarily caused a total interruption of conversation. The sprightly creatures ran round the table to chuse where they would sit. At length this great difficulty of courts and cabinets, *the choice of places*, was settled. The little things were jostled in between the ladies, who all contended who should get possession of the *little beauties*. One was in raptures with the rosy cheeks of a sweet girl she held in her lap. A second exclaimed aloud at the beautiful lace with which the frock of another was trimmed, and which she was sure mamma had given her for being good. A profitable, and, doubtless, a lasting and inseparable association, was thus formed in the child's mind between lace and goodness. A third cried out, "Look at the pretty angel!—do but observe—her bracelets are as blue as her eyes. Did you ever see such a match?" "Surely, lady Belfield," cried a fourth, "you carried the eyes to the shop, or there must have been a shade of difference." I myself, who am passionately fond of children, eyed the sweet little rebels with complacency, notwithstanding the unseasonableness of their interruption.

At last, when they were all disposed of, I resumed my enquiries about the resting place of the mummies. But the grand dispute, who should have oranges, and who should have almonds and raisins, soon raised such a clamour, that it was impossible to hear my Egyptian friend. This great contest was, however, at length settled, and I was returning to the antiquities of Memphis, when the important point, who should have red wine, and who should have white, who should have half a glass, and who a whole one, set us again in an uproar. Sir John was visibly uneasy, and commanded silence. During this

interval of peace, I gave up the catacombs, and took refuge in the pyramids. But I had no sooner proposed my question about the serpent said to be found in one of them, than the son and heir, a fine little fellow, just six years old, reaching out his arm to dart an apple across the table at his sister, roguishly intending to overset her glass, unluckily overthrew his own, brimful of port wine. The whole contents were discharged on the elegant drapery of a white robed nymph.

All was now agitation and distress, and disturbance and confusion; the gentlemen ringing for napkins, the ladies assisting the dripping fair one; each vying with the other who should recommend the most approved specific for getting out the stain of red wine, and comforting the sufferer by stories of similar misfortunes. The poor little culprit was dismissed, and all difficulties and disasters seemed at last surmounted. But you cannot heat up again an interest which has been so often cooled. The thread of conversation had been so frequently broken, that I despaired of seeing it tied together again. I sorrowfully gave up catacombs, paramids, and serpent, and was obliged to content myself with a little desultory chat with my next neighbour; sorry and disappointed to glean only a few scattered ears, where I had expected so abundant a harvest; and the day from which I had promised myself so much benefit and delight, passed away with a very slender acquisition of either.

CHAP. V.

I WENT almost immediately after, at the invitation of Mr. Ranby, to pass a few days at his villa at Hampstead. Mr. and Mrs. Ranby were esteemed pious persons, but having risen to great affluence by a sudden turn of fortune in a commercial engagement, they had a little self-sufficiency, and not a little disposition to ascribe an undue importance to wealth. This I should have thought more pardonable under their circumstances, had I not expected that religion would in this respect have more than supplied the deficiencies of education. Their religion, however, consisted almost exclusively in a disproportionate zeal for a very few doctrines. And though they were far from being immoral in their own practice, yet, in their discourse, they affected to undervalue morality.

This was, indeed, more particularly the case with the lady, whose chief object of discourse seemed to be, to convince me of her great superiority to her husband in polemical skill. Her chaste conversation certainly was not coupled with fear. In one respect she was the very reverse of those Pharisees who were scrupulously exact about their petty observances. Mrs. Ranby was, on the contrary, anxious about a very few important particulars, and exonerated herself from the necessity of all inferior attentions. She was strongly attached to one or two preachers, and discovered little candour for all others, or for those who attended them. Nay, she somewhat doubted of the soundness of the faith of her friends and acquaintance, who would not incur great inconvenience to attend one or other of her favourites.

Mrs. Ranby's table was "more than hospitably good." There was not the least suspicion of Latin here. The eulogist of female ignorance might have dined in comfortable security against the intrusion and vanity of erudition. She had three daughters, not unpleasing young women. But I was much concerned to observe, that they were not only dressed to the very extremity of the fashion, but their drapery was as transparent, as short, and as scanty; there was as sedulous a disclosure of their persons, and as great a redundancy of ornaments, as I had seen in the gayest circles.

"Expect not perfection," said my good mother, "but look for *consistency*." This principle my parents had not only taught me in the closet, but had illustrated by their deportment in the family and in the world. They observed a uniform correctness in their general demeanor. They were not over anxious about character for its own sake, but they were tenderly vigilant not to bring any reproach on the Christian name by imprudence, negligence, or inconsistency, even in small things. "Custom," said my mother, "can never alter the immutable nature of right; fashion can never justify any practice which is improper in itself; and to dress indecently is as great an offence against purity and modesty, when it is the fashion, as when it is obsolete. There should be a line of demarcation somewhere. In the article of dress and appearance, Christian mothers should make a stand. They should not be so unreasonable as to expect that a young girl will of herself have courage to oppose the united temptations of fashion without, and the secret prevalence of corruption within: and authority should be called in where admonition fails."

The conversation after dinner took a religious turn. Mrs. Ranby was not unacquainted with the subject, and expressed herself with energy on many serious points. I could have been glad, however, to have seen her views a little more practical, and her spirit a little less censorious. I saw she took the lead in debate, and that Mr. Ranby submitted to act as subaltern; but whether his meekness was the effect of piety or fear, I could not at that time determine. She protested vehemently against all dissipation, in which I cordially joined her, though I hope with something less intemperance of manner, and less acrimony against those who pursued it. I began, however to lose sight of the errors of the daughters' dress in the pleasure I felt at conversing with so pious a mother of a family. For pious she really was, though her piety was a little debased by coarseness, and not a little disfigured by asperity.

I was sorry to observe that the young ladies not only took no part in the conversation, but that they did not even seem to know what was going on; and I must confess the *manner* in which it was conducted was not calculated to make the subject interesting. The girls sat jogging and whispering each other, and got away as fast as they could.

As soon as they were withdrawn—"There, sir," said the mother, "are three girls who will make excellent wives.—They never were at a ball or a play in their lives; and yet, though I say it, who should not say it, they are as highly accomplished as any ladies at St James's." I cordially approved the former part of her assertion, and bowed in silence to the latter.

I took this opportunity of enquiring what had been her mode of religious instruction for her daughters; but though I put the question with much caution and

deference, she looked displeased, and said she did not think it necessary to do a great deal in that way; all these things must come from above; it was not human endeavours, but divine grace, which made Christians. I observed, that the truth appeared to be, that divine grace *blessing* human endeavours, seemed most likely to accomplish that great end. She replied, that experience was not on my side, for that the children of religious parents were not always religious. I allowed that it was too true. I knew she drew her instances from two or three of her own friends, who, while they discovered much earnestness about their own spiritual interests, had almost totally neglected the religious cultivation of their children; the daughters in particular had been suffered to follow their own devices, and to waste their days in company of their own chusing, and in the most frivolous manner. "What do ye more than others?" is an interrogation which this negligence has frequently suggested. Nay, professing serious piety, if ye do not more than those who profess it not, ye do less.

I took the liberty to remark, that though there was no such thing as hereditary holiness, no entail of goodness; yet the Almighty had promised in the scriptures many blessings to the offspring of the righteous. He never meant, however, that religion was to be transferred arbitrarily like an heir-loom; but the promise was accompanied with conditions and injunctions. The directions were express and frequent, to inculcate early and late the great truths of religion; nay, it was enforced with all the minuteness of detail, "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little"—at all times and seasons, "walking by the way, and sitting in the house." I hazarded the assertion, that it would *generally* be found that

where the children of pious parents turned out ill, there had been some mistake, some neglect, or some fault on the part of the parents; that they had not used the right methods. I observed that I thought it did not at all derogate from the sovereignty of the Almighty, that he appointed certain means to accomplish certain ends; and that the adopting these, in conformity to his appointment, and dependence on his blessing, seemed to be one of the cases in which we should prove our faith by our obedience.

I found I had gone too far—she said, with some warmth, that she was not wanting in any duty to her daughters; she set them a good example, and she prayed daily for their conversion. I highly commended her for both, but risked the observation, "that praying without instilling principles, might be as inefficacious as instruction without prayer. That it was like a husbandman, who should expect that praying for sunshine, should produce a crop of corn in a field where not one grain had been sown. God, indeed, *could* effect this, but he does not do it; and the means being of his own appointment, his omnipotence is not less exerted, by his directing certain effects to follow certain causes, than it would be by an arbitrary act." As it was evident that she did not chuse to quarrel with me, she contented herself with saying coldly, that she perceived I was a *legalist*, and had but a low view of divine things.

At tea I found the young ladies took no more interest in the conversation, than they had done at dinner, but sat whispering and laughing, and netting white silk gloves, till they were summoned to the harpsichord. Despairing of getting on with them in company, I proposed a walk in the garden. I now found them as willing to talk, as destitute of any thing

to say. Their conversation was vapid and frivolous. They laid great stress on small things. They seemed to have no shades in their understanding, but used the strongest terms for the commonest occasions, and admiration was excited by things hardly worthy to command attention. They were extremely glad, and extremely sorry, on subjects not calculated to excite affections of any kind. They were animated about trifles, and indifferent on things of importance. They were, I must confess, frank and good-natured, but it was evident, that as they were too open to have any thing to conceal, so they were too uninformed to have any thing to produce; and I was resolved not to risk my happiness with a woman who could not contribute her full share towards spending a wet winter cheerfully in the country.

The next day, all the hours from breakfast to dinner were devoted to the harp. I had the vanity to think that this sacrifice of time was made in compliment to me, as I had professed to like music; till I found that all their mornings were spent in the same manner; and the only fruit of their education, which seemed to be used to any purpose, was, that after their family devotions in the evening, they sung and played a hymn. This was almost the only sign they gave of intellectual or spiritual life. They attended morning prayers if they were dressed before the bell rang. One morning when they did not appear till late, they were reproved by their father; Mrs. Ranby said, "she should be more angry with them for their irregularity, were it not that Mr. Ranby obstinately persisted in reading a printed form, which he was persuaded could not do any body much good." The poor man, who was really well disposed, very properly defended himself, by saying, that he hoped his own heart

went along with every word he read; and as to his family, he thought it much more beneficial for them to join in an excellent composition of a judicious divine, than to attend to any such crude rhapsody as he should be able to produce, whose education had not qualified him to lead the devotions of others. I had never heard him venture to make use of his understanding before; and I continued to find it much better than I had at first given him credit for. The lady observed, with some asperity, that where there were *gifts* and *graces*, it superceded the necessity of learning.

In vindication of my own good breeding, I should observe that, in my little debates with Mrs. Ranby, to which I was always challenged by her, I never lost sight of that becoming example of the son of Cato, who, when about to deliver sentiments which might be thought too assuming in so young a man, introduced his admonitions with this modest preface,

Remember what our *father* oft has taught us.

I, without quoting the son of the sage of Utica, constantly adduced the paternal authority for opinions which might savour too much of arrogance without such a sanction.

I observed in the course of my visit, that self-denial made no part of Mrs. Ranby's religious plan. She fancied, I believe, that it savoured of works, and of works she was evidently afraid. She talked as if activity were useless, and exertion unnecessary, and as if, like inanimate matter, we had nothing to do but to sit still and be shone upon.

I assured her that though I depended on the mercy of God, through the merits of his Son, for salvation, as entirely as she could do, yet I thought that Almighty grace, so far from setting aside diligent exer-

tion, was the principle which promoted it. That salvation is in no part of scripture represented as attainable by the indolent christian, if I might couple such contradictory terms. That I had been often awfully struck with the plain declarations, "that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence"—"strive to enter in at the strait gate"—"whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might"—"give diligence to make your calling sure"—"work out your own salvation." To this labour, this watchfulness, this sedulity of endeavour, the crown of life is expressly promised, and salvation is not less the free gift of God, because he has annexed certain conditions to our obtaining it.

The more I argued, the more I found my reputation decline, yet to argue she compelled me. I really believe she was sincere, but she was ill informed, governed by feelings and impulses, rather than by the plain express rule of scripture. It was not that she did not read scripture, but she interpreted it her own way; built opinions on insulated texts; did not compare scripture with scripture, except as it concurred to strengthen her bias. She considered with a disproportionate fondness, those passages which supported her preconceived opinions, instead of being uniformly governed by the general tenor and spirit of the sacred page. She had far less reverence for the preceptive, than for the doctrinal parts, because she did not sufficiently consider faith as an operative influential principle; nor did she conceive that the sublimest doctrines involve deep practical consequences. She did not consider the government of the tongue, nor the command of her passions, as forming any material part of the christian character. Her zeal was fiery because her temper was so; and her charity was cold because it was an expensive propensity to

keep warm. Among the perfections of the Redeemer's character, she did not consider his being "meek and lowly" as an example, the influence of which was to extend to her. She considered it indeed as *admirable* but not as *imitable;* a distinction she was very apt to make in all her practical dissertations, and in her interpretation of scripture.

In the evening Mrs. Ranby was lamenting in general and rather customary terms, her own exceeding sinfulness. Mr. Ranby said, "You accuse yourself rather too heavily, my dear, you have sins to be sure." "And pray what sins have I, Mr. Ranby?" said she, turning upon him with so much quickness that the poor man started. "Nay," said he meekly, "I did not mean to offend you; so far from it, that hearing you condemn yourself so grievously, I intended to comfort you, and to say that, except a few faults,—" "And pray what faults?" interrupted she, continuing to speak however, lest he should catch an interval to tell them. "I defy you Mr. Ranby to produce one." "My dear," replied he, "as you charged yourself with all, I thought it would be letting you off cheaply by naming only two or three, such as ——." Here, fearing matters would go too far, I interposed, and softening things as much as I could for the lady, said, "I conceived that Mr. Ranby meant, that though she partook of the general corruption —" Here Ranby interrupting me with more spirit than I thought he possessed, said "General corruption, Sir, must be the source of particular corruption. I did not mean that my wife was worse than other women."—"Worse, Mr. Ranby, worse?" cried she. Ranby, for the first time in his life, not minding her, went on, "As she is always insisting that the whole species is corrupt, she cannot help allowing that she herself has not quite

escaped the infection. Now to be a sinner in the gross and a saint in the detail; that is, to have all sins, and no faults, is a thing I do not quite comprehend."

After he had left the room, which he did as the shortest way of allaying the storm, she apologized for him, said, "he was a well meaning man, and acted up to the little light he had;" but added, "that he was unacquainted with religious feelings, and knew little of the nature of conversion."

Mrs. Ranby, I found, seems to consider Christianity as a kind of free-masonry, and therefore thinks it superfluous to speak on serious subjects to any but the initiated. If they do not *return the sign*, she gives them up as blind and dead. She thinks she can only make herself intelligible to those to whom certain peculiar phrases are familiar; and though her friends may be correct, devout, and both doctrinally and practically pious; yet if they cannot catch a certain mystic meaning, if there is not a sympathy of intelligence between her and them, if they do not fully conceive of impressions, and cannot respond to mysterious communications, she holds them unworthy of intercourse with her. She does not so much insist on high moral excellence as the criterion of their worth, as on their own account of their internal feelings.

She holds very cheap, that gradual growth in piety which is, in reality, no less the effect of divine grace, than those instantaneous conversions, which she believes to be so common. She cannot be persuaded that, of every advance in piety, of every improvement in virtue, of every illumination of the understanding, of every amendment in the heart, of every rectification of the will, the spirit of God is no less the author, because it is progressive, than if it were sudden It is true, Omnipotence can, when he pleases still pro-

duce these instantaneous effects, as he has sometimes done; but as it is not his established or common mode of operation, it seems vain and rash, presumptuously to wait for these miraculous interferences. An implicit dependence, however, on such interferences, is certainly more gratifying to the genius of enthusiasm, than the anxious vigilance, the fervent prayer, the daily struggle, the sometimes scarcely perceptible though constant progress of the sober-minded Christians. Such a Christian is fully aware that his heart requires as much watching in the more advanced as in the earliest stages of his religious course. He is cheerful in a well-grounded hope, and looks not for extacies, till that hope be swallowed up in fruition. Thankful if he feel in his heart a growing love to God, and an encreasing submission to his will, though he is unconscious of visions, and unacquainted with any revelation but that which God has made in his word. He remembers, and he derives consolation from the remembrance, that his Saviour, in his most gracious and soothing invitation to the "heavy laden," has mercifully promised "rest," but he has no where promised rapture.

CHAP. VI.

BUT to return to Mrs. Ranby's daughters. Is this *consistency*, said I to myself, when I compared the inanity of the life with the seriousness of the discourse; and contrasted the vacant way in which the day was spent, with the decent and devout manner in which it was begun and ended? I recollected, that under the early though imperfect sacred institution, the fire of the morning and evening sacrifice was never suffered to be extinguished during the day.

Though Mrs. Ranby would have thought it a little heathenish to have had her daughters instructed in polite literature, and to have filled a leisure hour in reading to her a useful book, that was not professedly religious, she felt no compunction at their waste of time, or the trifling pursuits in which the day was suffered to spend itself. The piano-forte, when they were weary of the harp, copying some indifferent drawings, gilding a set of flower-pots, and netting white gloves and veils, seemed to fill up the whole business of these immortal beings, of these Christians, for whom it had been solemnly engaged that they should manfully fight under Christ's banner.

On a farther acquaintance, I was much more inclined to lay the blame on their education than their dispositions. I found them not only good humoured, but charitably disposed; but their charities were small and casual, often ill-applied, and always without a plan. They knew nothing of the state, character, or wants of the neighbouring poor; and it had never been pointed out to them that the instruction of the

young and ignorant made any part of the duty of the rich towards them.

When I once ventured to drop a hint on this subject to Mrs. Ranby, she drily said, there were many other ways of doing good to the poor, besides exposing her daughters to the probability of catching diseases, and the certainty of getting dirt by such visits. Her subscription was never wanting when she was *quite sure* that the object was deserving. As I suspected that she a little over-rated her own charity, I could not forbear observing, that I did not think it demanded a combination of all the virtues to entitle a poor sick wretch to a dinner. And though I durst not quote so light an authority as Hamlet to her, I could not help saying to myself, *give every man his due, and who shall 'scape whipping?* O! if God dealt so rigidly with us; if he waited to bestow his ordinary blessings till we were good enough to deserve them, who would be clothed? who would be fed? who would have a roof to shelter him?

It was not that she gave nothing away, but she had a great dislike to relieve any but those of her own religious persuasion. Though her Redeemer laid down his life for all people, nations, and languages, she will only lay down her money for a very limited number of a very limited class. To be religious is not claim sufficient on her bounty; they must be religious in a particular way.

The Miss Ranbys had not been habituated to make any systematic provision for regular charity, or for any of those accidental calamities, for which the purse of the affluent should always be provided; and being very expensive in their persons, they had often not a sixpence to bestow, when the most deserving case presented itself. This must frequently happen where

there is no specific fund for charity, which should be included in the general arrangement of expences; and the exercise of benevolence not be left to depend on the accidental state of the purse. If no new trinket happened to be wanted, these young ladies were liberal to any application, though always without judging of its merits by their own eyes and ears. But if there was a competition between a sick family and a new broach, the broach was sure to carry the day. This would not have been the case, had they been habituated to visit themselves the abodes of penury and woe. Their flexible young hearts would have been wrought upon by the actual sight of miseries, the impression of which was feeble when it reached their ears at a distance, surrounded as they were with all the softnesses and accommodations of luxurious life. "They would do what they could. They hoped it was not so bad as was represented." They fell into the usual way of pacifying their consciences by their regrets; and brought themselves to believe that their sympathy with the suffering was an atonement for their not relieving it.

I observed with concern, during my visit, how little the Christian temper seemed to be considered as a part of the Christian religion. This appeared in the daily concerns of this high professor. An opinion contradicted, a person of different religious views commended, the smallest opposition to her will, the intrusion of an unseasonable visitor, even an imperfection in the dressing of some dish at table: such trifles not only discomposed her, but the discomposure was manifested with a vehemence, which she was not aware was a fault; nor did she seem at all sensible that her religion was ever to be resorted to but on great occasions, forgetting that great occasions but

rarely occur in common life, and that these small passes, at which the enemy is perpetually entering, the true christian will vigilantly guard.

I observed in Mrs. Ranby one striking inconsistency. While she considered it as forming a complete line of separation from the world, that she and her daughters abstained from public places, she had no objection to their indemnifying themselves for this forbearance, by devoting so monstrous a disproportion of their time to that very amusement which constitutes so principal a part of diversion abroad. The time which is redeemed from what is wrong, is of little value, if not dedicated to what is right; and it is not enough that the doctrines of the gospel furnish a subject for discussion, if they do not furnish a principle of action.

One of the most obvious defects which struck me in this, and two or three other families, whom I afterwards visited, was the want of companionableness in the daughters. They did not seem to form a part of the family compact; but made a kind of distinct branch of themselves. Surely, when only the parents and a few select friends are met together in a family way, the daughters should contribute their portion to enliven the domestic circle. They were always ready to sing and to play, but did not take the pains to produce themselves in conversation: but seemed to carry on a distinct intercourse, by herding, and whispering, and laughing together.

In some women who seemed to be possessed of good ingredients, they were so ill mixed up together, as not to produce an elegant, interesting companion. It appeared to me that three of the gra

inducements in the choice of a wife, are, that a man may have a directress for his family, a preceptress for his children, and a companion for himself. Can it be honestly affirmed that the present habits of domestic life are generally favourable to the union of these three essentials? Yet which of them can a man of sense and principle consent to relinquish in his conjugal prospects?

CHAP. VII.

I RETURNED to town at the end of a few days. To a speculative stranger, a *London day* presents every variety of circumstance in every conceivable shape, of which human life is susceptible. When you trace the solicitude of the morning countenance, the anxious exploring of the morning paper, the eager interrogation of the morning guest; when you hear the dismal enumeration of losses by land, and perils by sea—taxes trebling, dangers multiplying, commerce annihilating, war protracted, invasion threatening, destruction impending—your mind catches and communicates the terror, and you feel yourself "falling with a falling state."

But when, in the course of the very same day, you meet these gloomy prognosticators at the sumptuous, not "dinner, but Hecatomb," at the gorgeous fête, the splendid spectacle; when you hear the frivolous discourse, witness the luxurious dissipation, contemplate the boundless indulgence, and observe the ruinous gaming, you would be ready to exclaim, "Am I not supping in the Antipodes of that land in which I breakfasted? Surely this is a country of different men, different characters, and different circumstances. This at least is a place in which there is neither fear nor danger, nor want, nor misery, nor war."

If you observed the overflowing subscriptions raised, the innumerable societies formed, the committees, appointed, the agents employed, the royal patrons engaged, the noble presidents provided, the

palace-like structures erected; and all this to alleviate, to cure, and even to prevent, every calamity which the indigent can suffer, or the affluent conceive; to remove not only want but ignorance; to suppress not only misery but vice—would you not exclaim with Hamlet, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In action how like an angel! in compassion how like a God!"

If you look into the whole comet-like excentric orb of the human character; if you compared all the struggling contrariety of principle and of passion: the clashing of opinion and of action, of resolution and of performance; the victories of evil over the propensities to good; if you contrasted the splendid virtue with the disorderly vice; the exalted generosity with the selfish narrowness; the provident bounty with the thoughtless prodigality; the extremes of all that is dignified, with the excesses of all that is abject, would you not exclaim, in the very spirit of Pascal, O! the grandeur and the littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness of man!

If you attended the debates in our great deliberative assemblies; if you heard the argument and the eloquence, "the wisdom and the wit," the public spirit and the disinterestedness; Curtius's devotedness to his country, and Regulus's disdain of self, expressed with all the logic which reason can suggest, and embellished with all the rhetoric which fancy can supply, would you not rapturously cry out, this is

Above all Greek, above all Roman fame?

But if you discerned the bitter personality, the incurable prejudice, the cutting retort, the suspicious implication, the recriminating sneer, the cherished animosity; if you beheld the interests of an empire standing still, the business of the civilized globe suspended, while two intellectual gladiators are thrusting each to give the other a fall, and to shew his own strength; would you not lament the littleness of the great, the infirmities of the good, and the weaknesses of the wise? Would you not, soaring a flight far above Hamlet or Pascal, apostrophize with the Royal Psalmist, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou regardest him?"

But to descend to my individual concerns. Among my acquaintance I visited two separate families, where the daughters were remarkably attractive, and more than usually endowed with beauty, sense, and elegance; but I was deterred from following up the acquaintance, by observing, in each family, practices which, though very different, almost equally revolted me.

In one, where the young ladies had large fortunes, they insinuated themselves into the admiration, and invited the familiarity of young men, by attentions the most flattering, and civilities the most alluring. When they had made sure of their aim, and the admirers were encouraged to make proposals, the ladies burst out into a loud laugh, wondered what the man could mean; they never dreamt of any thing more than common politeness; then petrified them with distant looks, and turned about to practise the same arts on others.

The other family in which I thought I had secured an agreeable intimacy, I instantly deserted

in observing the gracious and engaging reception given by the ladies to more than one libertine of the most notorious profligacy. The men were handsome, and elegant, and fashionable, and had figured in newspapers and courts of justice. This degrading popularity rather attracted than repelled attention; and while the guilty associates in their crimes were shunned with abhorrence by these very ladies, the specious undoers were not only received with complaisance, but there was a sort of competition who should be most strenuous in their endeavours to attract them.—Surely women of fashion can hardly make a more corrupt use of influence, a talent for which they will be peculiarly accountable. Surely, mere personal purity can hardly deserve the name of virtue in those who can sanction notoriously vicious characters, which their reprobation, if it could not reform, would at least degrade.

On a further acquaintance, I found Sir John and Lady Belfield to be persons of much worth. They were candid, generous, and sincere. They saw the errors of the world in which they lived, but had not resolution to emancipate themselves from its shackles. They partook, indeed, very sparingly of its diversions, not so much because they suspected their evil tendency, as because they were weary of them, and because they had better resources in themselves.

Indeed, it is wonderful that more people from mere good sense and just taste, without the operation of any religious consideration, do not, when the first ardour is cooled, perceive the futility of *what is called* pleasure, and decline it as the man *declines the* amusements of the child. But fashion-

able society produces few persons who, like the ex-courtier of King David, assign their four-score years as a reason for no longer "delighting in the voice of singing men and singing women."

Sir John and Lady Belfield, however, kept up a large general acquaintance; and it is not easy to continue to associate with the world, without retaining something of its spirit. Their standard of morals was high, compared with that of those with whom they lived; but when the standard of the Gospel was suggested, they drew in a little and thought *things might be carried too far.*— There was nothing in their practice which made it their interest to hope that Christianity might not be true. They both assented to its doctrines, and lived in a kind of general hope of its final promises. But their views were neither correct, nor elevated. They were contented to generalize the doctrines of scripture, and though they venerated its awful truths in the aggregate, they rather took them upon trust than laboured to understand them, or to imbue their minds with the spirit of them. Many a high professor, however, might have blushed to see how carefully they exercised not a few christian dispositions; how kind and patient they were! how favourable in their construction of the actions of others! how charitable to the necessitous! how exact in veracity! and how tender of the reputation of their neighbour!

Sir John had been early hurt by living so much with men of the world, with wits, politicians, and philosophers. This, though he had escaped the contagion of false principles, had kept back the growth of such as were true. Men versed in *the world,* and abstracted from all religious society, *begin,* in time, a little to suspect whether

their own religious opinions may not possiby be wrong, or at least rigid, when they see them so opposite to those of persons to whose judgment they are accustomed to look up in other points. He found too, that, in the society in which he lived, the reputation of religion detracted much from that of talents; and a man does not care to have his understanding questioned by those in whose opinion he wishes to stand well. This apprehension did not, indeed, drive him to renounce his principles, but it led him to conceal them; and that piety which is forcibly kept out of sight, which has nothing to fortify it, and every thing to repel it, is too apt to decline.

His marriage with an amiable woman, whose virtues and graces attached him to his own home, drew him off from the most dangerous of his prior connections. This union had at once improved his character, and augmented his happiness. If Lady Belfield erred, it was through excess of kindness and candour. Her kindness led to the too great indulgence of her children; her candour to the too favorable construction of the errors of her acquaintance. She was the very reverse of my Hampstead friend. Whereas Mrs. Ranby thought hardly any body would be saved, Lady Belfield comforted herself that hardly any body was in danger. This opinion was not taken up as a palliative to quiet her conscience, on account of the sins of her own conduct, for her conduct was remarkably correct; but it sprung from a natural sweetness of temper, joined to a mind not sufficiently informed and guided by scriptural truth. She was candid and teachable, but as she could not help seeing that she had more religion than most of her acquaintance, she felt a secret complacency in ob-

serving how far her principles rose above theirs, instead of an humbling conviction of how far her own fell below the requisitions of the gospel.

The fundamental error was, that she had no distinct view of the corruption of human nature.—She often lamented the weaknesses and vices of individuals, but thought all vice an incidental not a radical mischief, the effect of thoughtlessness and casual temptation. She talked with discrimination of the faults of some of her children; but while she rejoiced in the happier dispositions of others, she never suspected that they had all brought into the world with them any natural tendency to evil; and thought it cruel to suppose that such innocent little things had any such wrong propensities as education would not effectually cure. In every thing the complete contrast of Mrs. Ranby —as the latter thought education could do nothing, Lady Belfield though it would do every thing; that there was no good tendency which it would not bring to perfection, and no corruption which it could not completely eradicate. On the operation of a higher influence she placed too little dependence; while Mrs. Ranby rested in an unreasonable trust on an interference not warranted by scripture.

In regard to her children, Lady Belfield was led by the strength of her affection to extreme indulgence. She encouraged no vice in them, but she did not sufficiently check those indications which are the seeds of vice. She reproved the actual fault, but never thought of implanting a principle which might extirpate the evil from whence the fault sprung; so that the individual error and the individual correction were continually recurring.

As Mrs. Ranby, I had observed, seldom quoted

any sacred writer but St. Paul, I remarked that Lady Belfield admired almost exclusively Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the historical books of the Bible. Of the Epistles, that of St. James was her favorite; the others she thought chiefly, if not entirely, applicable to the circumstances of the Jews and Pagans, to the converts from among whom they were addressed. If she entertained rather an awful reverence for the doctrinal parts, than an earnest wish to study them, it arose from the common mistake of believing that they were purely speculative, without being aware of their deep practical importance. But if these two ladies were diametrically opposite to each other in certain points, both were frequently right in what they assumed, and both wrong only in what they rejected. Each contended for one half of that which will not save when disjoined from the other, but which, when united to it, makes up the complete Christian character.

Lady Belfield, who was, if I may so speak, constitutionally charitable, almost thought that heaven might be purchased by charity. She inverted the valuable superstructure of good works, and laid them as her foundation; and while Mrs. Ranby would not perhaps, much have blamed Moses for breaking the tables of the law, had he only demolished the second, Lady Belfield would have saved the second, as the more important of the two.

Lady Belfield has less vanity than any woman I ever knew who was not governed by a very strict religious principle. Her modesty never courted the admiration of the world, but her timidity too much dreaded its censure. She would not do a wrong thing to obtain any applause, but she omitted some right ones from the dread of blame.

CHAP. VIII.

THE house of Sir John Belfield was become a pleasant kind of home to me. He and his lady seldom went out in an evening. Happy in each other and in their children, though they lived much with the rational, they associated as little as they thought possible with the racketing world. Yet being known to be generally at home, they were exposed to the inroads of certain invaders, called fine ladies, who, always afraid of being too early for their parties, are constantly on the watch, how to disburthen themselves for the intermediate hour, of the heavy commodity *time*; a raw material, which, as they seldom work up at home, they are always willing to truck against the time of their domestic acquaintance. Now as these last *have* always something to do, it is an unfair traffic, "all the reciprocity is on one side," to borrow the expression of an illustrious statesman; and the barter is as disadvantageous to the sober-home trader, as that of the honest negroes, who exchange their gold dust and ivory for the beads and bits of glass of the wily English.

These nightly irruptions, though sometimes inconvenient to my friends, were of use to me, as they enable me to see and judge more of the gay world, than I could have done without going in search of it; a risk, which I thought bore no proportion to the gain. It was like learning the language of the enemy's country at home.

One evening, when we were sitting happily alone

in the library, Lady Belfield, working at her embroidery, cheerfully joining in our little discussions, and comparing our peaceful pleasures with those pursued by the occupiers of the countless carriages which were tearing up the "wheel-worn streets," or jostling each other at the door of the next house, where a grand assembly was collecting its myriads—Sir John asked what should be the evening book. Then rising, he took down from the shelf Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination.

"Is it," said he, as soon as he sat down, "the rage for novelty, or a real degeneracy of taste, that we now so seldom hear of a poet, who, when I was a boy, was the admiration of every man who had a relish for true genius? I cannot defend his principles, since in a work, of which *Man* is professedly the object, he has overlooked his *immortality*; a subject, which one wonders did not force itself upon him, as so congenial to the sublimity of his genius, whatever his religious views might have been. But to speak of him only as a poet; a work, which abounds in a richer profusion of images, and a more variegated luxuriance of expression than the Pleasures of Imagination, cannot easily be found. The flimsy metre of our day seems to add fresh value to his sinewy verse. We have no happier master of poetic numbers; none who better knew

To build the lofty rhyme.

The condensed vigour, so indispensible to blank verse, the skilful variation of the pause, the masterly structure of the period, and all the occult

mysteries of the art, can perhaps be best learnt from Akenside. If he could have conveyed to Thomson his melody and rhythm, and Thomson would have paid him back in perspicuity and transparency of meaning, how might they have enriched each other!"

"I confess," said I, "in reading Akenside, I have now and then found the same passage at once enchanting and unintelligible. As it happens to many frequenters of the Opera, the music always transports, but the words are not always understood." I then desired my friend to gratify us with the first book of the Pleasures of Imagination.

Sir John is a passionate lover of poetry, in which he has a fine taste. He read it with much spirit and feeling, especially these truly classical lines,—

> *Mind, mind* alone, bear witness earth and heaven,
> The living fountains in itself contains
> Of beauteous and sublime: here hand in hand
> Sit paramount the graces; here enthroned
> Celestial Venus, with divinest airs
> Invites the soul to never-fading joy.

"The reputation of this exquisite passage," said he, laying down the book, "is established by the consenting suffrage of all men of taste, though by the critical countenance you are beginning to put on, you look as if you had a mind to attack it."

"So far from it," said I, "that I know nothing more splendid in the whole mass of our poetry. And I feel almost guilty of high treason against the majesty of the sublimer Muses, in the remark I am going to hazard, on the celebrated lines which follow. The Poet's object, through this and the

two following pages, is to establish the infinite superiority of mind over unconscious matter, even in its fairest forms. The idea is as just as the execution is beautiful: so also is his supreme elevation of intellect, over

Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts.

Nothing again can be finer, than his subsequent preference of

The powers of genius and design,

over even the stupendous range

Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres.

He proceeds to ransack the stores of the mental and the moral world, as he hath done the world of matter, and with a pen dipped in Hippocrene, opposes to the latter,

The charms of virtuous friendship, &c.

* * * * * * *

The candid blush
Of him who strives with fortune to be just.

* * * * * * *

All the mild majesty of private life.

* * * * * * *

The graceful tear that streams from others' woes.

"Why, Charles," said Sir John, "I am glad to find you the enthusiastic eulogist of the passage of which I suspected you were about to be the saucy censurer."

"Censure," replied I, "is perhaps too strong a term for any part, especially the most admired part of this fine poem. I need not repeat the lines

on which I was going to risk a slight observation; they live in the mind and memory of every lover of the Muses."

"I will read the next passage, however," said Sir John, "that I may be better able to controvert your criticism:

Look then abroad through nature to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres,
Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,
And speak, oh man! does this capacious scene
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose
Refulgent from the stroke of Cesar's fate
Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country hail;
For lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
And Rome again is free!

"What a grand and powerful passage!" said Sir John.

"I acknowledge it," said I, "but is it as just as it is grand? *Le vrai est le seul beau.* Is it a fair and direct opposition between mind and matter? The poet could not have expressed the image more nobly, but might he not, out of the abundant treasures of his opulent mind have chosen it with more felicity? Is an act of murder, even of an usurper, as happily contrasted with the organization of matter, as the other beautiful instances I named, and which he goes on to select? The superiority of mental beauty is the point he is establishing, and his elaborate preparation leads you to expect all his other instances to be drawn from

pure mental excellence. His other exemplifications are general, this is particular. They are a class, this is only a variety. I question if Milton, who was at least as ardent a champion for liberty, and as much of a party-man as Akenside, would have used this illustration. Milton, though he often insinuates a political stroke in his great poem, always, I think, generalizes. Whatever had been his principles, or at whatever period he had written, I question, when he wanted to describe the overthrow of authority by the rebel angels, if he would have illustrated it by Cromwell's seizing the mace, or the decapitation of Charles. Much less, if he would have selected those two instances as the triumph of mind over matter."

"But," said Sir John, "you forget that Akenside professedly adopts the language of Cicero in his second Philippic." He then read the note beginning with, Cæsare interfecto, &c.

"True," said I, "I am not arguing the matter as a point of fact, but as a point of just application. I pass over the comparison of Brutus with Jove, which by the way would have become Tully better than Akenside, but which Tully would have perhaps thought too bold. Cicero adorns his oration with this magnificent description, He relates it as an event, the other uses it as an illustration of that to which I humbly conceive it does not exactly apply. The orator paints the violent death of a hero; the poet adopts the description of this violent death, or rather of the stroke which caused it, to illustrate the perfection of intellectual grandeur. After all, it is as much a party question as a poetical one. A question on which the critic

will be apt to be guided in his decision by his
tics rather than by his taste. The splend
the passage, however, will inevitably dazz
feeling reader, till it produce the common
of excessive brightness, that of somewhat bli
the beholder."

CHAP. IX.

WHILE we were thus pleasantly engaged, the servant announced Mrs. Fentham; and a fashionable looking woman, about the middle of life, rather youthfully drest, and not far from handsome, made her appearance. Instead of breaking forth into the usual modish jargon, she politely entered into the subject in which she found us engaged; envied Lady Belfield the happiness of elegant quiet, which she herself might have been equally enjoying at her own house, and professed herself a warm admirer of poetry. She would probably have professed an equal fondness for metaphysics, geometry, military tactics, or the Arabic language, if she had happened to have found us employed in the study of either.

From poetry the transition to painting was easy and natural. Mrs. Fentham possessed all the phraseology of connoisseurship, and asked me if I was fond of pictures. I professed the delight I took in them in strong, that is, in true terms. She politely said, that Mr. Fentham had a very tolerable collection of the best masters, and particularly a Titian, which she would be happy to have the honour of shewing me next morning. I bowed my thankful assent; she appointed the hour, and soon after, looking at her watch, said she was afraid she must leave the delights of such a select and interesting society for a far less agreeable party.

When she was gone, I expressed my obligations to her politeness, and anticipated the pleasure I should have in seeing her pictures. "She is much more anxious that you should see her *Originals*," said Lady Belfield, smiling; "the kindness is not *quite* disinterested; take care of your heart."—Sir John, rather gravely, said, "It is with reluctance that I ever say any thing to the prejudice of any body that I receive in my house; but as the son of my valued friend, I think it fair to tell you that this vigilant matron keeps a keen look-out after all young men of fortune. This is not the first time that that Titian has been made the bate to catch a promising acquaintance. Indeed it is now grown so stale, that had you not been a new man, she would hardly have risked it. If you had happened not to like painting, some book would have been offered you. The return of a book naturally brings on a visit. But all these devices have not yet answered. The damsels still remain, like Shakespeare's plaintive maid, "in single blessedness." They do not, however, like her, spend gloomy nights

Chaunting cold hymns to the pale, lifeless moon,

but in singing sprightlier roundelays to livelier auditors."

I punctually attended the invitation, effectually shielded from danger by the friendly intimation, and a still more infallible Ægis, the charge of my father never to embark in any engagement till I had made my visit to Mr. Stanley. My veneration for his memory operated as a complete defence.

I saw and admired the pictures. The pictures brought on an invitation to dinner. I found Mrs.

ıtham to be in her conversation, a sensible, cor-
t, knowing woman. Her daughters were ele-
ıt in their figures, well instructed in the usual
omplishments, well bred, and apparently well
ıpered. Mr. Fentham was a man of business,
l of the world. He had a great income from a
ce under government, out of which the expen-
of his family permitted him to save nothing.—
vate fortune he had little or none. His em-
yment engaged him almost entirely, so that he
erfered but little with domestic affairs. A gen-
l air of elegance, almost amounting to magnifi-
ıce, pervaded the whole establishment.

at first saw but little to excite any suspicion of
artificial character of the lady of the house.—
e first gleam of light which let in the truth was
expressions most frequent in Mrs. Fentham's
uth—"What will the world say?" "What will
ıple think?" "How will such a thing appear?"
Vill it have a good look?" "The world is of
nion." "Won't such a thing be censured?"
a little acquaintance I discovered that human
ılause was the motive of all she said, and repu-
on her great object in all she did. Opinion was
idol to which she sacrificed. Decorum was
inspirer of her duties, and praise the reward
hem. The standard of the world was the stan-
d by which she weighed actions. She had no
her principle of conduct. She adopted the
ns of religion, because she saw that, carried to
ertain degree, they rather produced credit than
sure. While her husband adjusted his ac-
nts on the Sunday morning, she regularly car-
l her daughters to church, except a head-ache
been caught at the Saturday's opera; and as

regularly exhibited herself and them afterwards in Hyde Park. As she said it was Mr. Fentham's leisure day, she complimented him with always having a great dinner on Sundays, but alledged her piety as a reason for not having cards in the evening at home, though she had no scruple to make one at a private party at a friend's house; soberly conditioning, however, that there should not be more than *three tables*; the right or wrong, the decorum or impropriety, the gaiety or gravity always being made specifically to depend on the number of tables.

She was, in general, extremely severe against women who had lost their reputation; though she had no hesitation in visiting a few of the most dishonorable, if they were of high rank, or belonged to a certain set. In that case, she excused herself by saying, "that as fashionable people continued to countenance them, it was not for her to be scrupulous—One must sail with the stream—I can't set my face against the world." But if an unhappy girl had been drawn aside, or one who had not rank to bear her out had erred, that altered the case, and she then expressed the most virtuous indignation. When modesty happened to be in repute, not the necks of Queen Elizabeth and her courtly virgins were more entrenched in ruffs and shrouded in tuckers, than those of Mrs. Fentham and her daughters; but when *display* became the order of the day, the Grecian Venus was scarcely more unconscious of a veil.

With a very good understanding she never allowed herself one original thought, or one spontaneous action. Her ideas, her language, and her conduct were entirely regulated by the ideas, lan-

guage, and conduct of those who stood well with the world. Vanity in her was a steady, inward, but powerfully pervading principle. It did not evaporate in levity or indiscretion, but was the hidden, though forcible spring of her whole course of action. She had all the gratification which vanity affords in secret, and all the credit which its prudent operation procures in public. She was apparently guilty of no excess of any kind. She had a sober scale of creditable vices, and never allowed herself to exceed a few stated degrees in any of them. She reprobated gaming, but could not exist without cards. Masquerades she censured as highly extravagant and dangerous, but when given by ladies of high quality, at their own houses, she thought them an elegant and proper amusement. Though she sometimes went to the play, she did not care for what past on the stage, for she confessed the chief pleasure the theatre afforded, was to reckon up, when she came home, how many duchesses and countesses had bowed to her across the house.

A complete despot at home, her arbitrariness is so veiled by correctness of manner, and studied good breeding, that she obtains the credit of great mildness and moderation. She is said not to love her daughters who come too near her in age, and go too much beyond her in beauty to be forgiven; yet like a consummate politician, she is ever labouring for their advancement. She has generally several schemes in hand, and always one scheme under another, the under plot ready to be brought forward if the principal one fails. Though she encourages pretenders, yet she is afraid to accept of a tolerable proposal, lest a better should present

itself: but if the loftier hope fails, she then contrives to lure back the inferior offer. She can balance to a nicety, in the calculation of chances, the advantages or disadvantages of a higher possibility against a lower probability.

Though she neither wants reading nor taste, her mind is never sufficiently disengaged to make her an agreeable companion. Her head is always at work, conjecturing the event of every fresh ball and every new acquaintance. She cannot even

> Take her tea without a stratagem.

She set out in life with a very slender acquaintance, and clung for a while to one or two damaged peeresses, who were not received by women of their own rank. But I am told it was curious to see with what adroitness she could extricate herself from a disreputable acquaintance, when a more honourable one stept in to fill the niche. She made her way rapidly, by insinuating to one person of note how intimate she was with another, and to both what handsome things each said of the other. By constant attentions, petty offices, and measured flattery, she has got footing into almost every house of distinction. Her decorum is invariable. She boasts that she was never guilty of the indecency of violent passion. Poor woman! she fancies there is no violent passion but that of anger. Little does she think that ambition, vanity, the hunger of applause, a rage for being universally known, are all violent passions, however modified by discretion, or varnished by art. She suffers too all that "vexation of spirit" which treads on the heels of "vanity." Disappointment and jealousy poison the days devoted to pleasure. The party does not an-

swer. The wrong people never stay away, and the right ones never come. The guest for whom the fête is made is sure to fail. Her party is thin, while that of her competitor overflows; or there is a plenty of dowagers and a paucity of young men. When the costly and elaborate supper is on the table excuses arrive: even if the supper is crowded, the daughters remain upon hands.—How strikingly does she exemplify the strong expression of—"labouring in the fire for vanity"—"of giving her money for that which is not bread, and her labour for that which satisfieth not!"

After spending the day at Mrs. Fentham's I went to sup with my friends in Cavendish Square. Lady Belfield was impatient for my history of the dinner. But Sir John said, laughing, "You shall not say a word Charles—I can tell how it was as exactly as if I had been there.—Charlotte, who has the best voice, was brought out to sing, but was placed a little behind, as her person is not quite perfect; Maria, who is the most picturesque figure, was put *to attitudinize* at the harp, arrayed in the costume, and assuming the fascinating graces of Marmion's Lady Heron;

> Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
> The strings her fingers flew.

Then Charles, was the moment of peril! then according to your favorite Milton's most incongruous image,

> You took in sounds that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of death.

"For fear, however, that your heart of adamant should hold out against all these perilous assaults, its vulnerability was tried in other quarters. The

Titian would naturally lead to Lavinia's drawings. A beautiful sketch of the lakes would be produced, with a gentle intimation, what a sweet place Westmoreland must be to live in! When you had exhausted all proper raptures on the art and on the artist, it would be recollected, that as Westmoreland was so near Scotland, you would naturally be fond of a reel—The reel of course succeeded." Then, putting himself into an attitude, and speaking theatrically, he continued

"The universal Pan
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance—

Oh! no, I forget, universal Pan could not join—but he could admire.—Then all the perfections of all the nymphs busrt on you in full blaze.—Such a concentration of attractions you never could resist! You are *but* a man, and now, doubtless a lost man." Here he stopped to finish his laugh, and I was driven reluctantly to acknowledge that his picture, though a caricature, was, notwithstanding, a resemblance.

"And so," said Sir John, "you were brought under no power of incantation by this dangerous visit. You will not be driven, like the tempted Ithican, to tye yourself to a mast, or to flee for safety from the enchantment of these Syrens.

While we were at supper, with more gravity, he said, "Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which bring less accession to its comfort, than an unceasing struggle to rise to an elevation in society very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any stronger ascending power than mere vanity.—Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural ten-

dency to rise, and to lift their possessor. The flame, in mounting, does but obey its impulse.—But when there is no energy more powerful than the passion to be great, destitute of the gifts which confer greatness, the painful efforts of ambition are like water, forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires constant exertions of art, to keep up what art first set agoing. Poor Mrs. Fentham's head is perpetually at work to maintain the elevation she has reached. And how little after all is she considered by those on whose caresses her happiness depends! She has lost the esteem of her original circle, where she might have been respected, without gaining that of her high associates, who, though they receive her, still refuse her claims of equality. She is not considered as of their *establishment*, it is but *toleration* at best."

At Mrs. Fentham's, I encountered Lady Bab Lawless, a renowned modish dowager, famous for laying siege to the heart of every distinguished man, with the united artillery of her own wit, and her daughter's beauty. How many ways there are of being wrong! She was of a character diametrically opposite to that of Mrs. Fentham. She had the same end in view, but the means she used to accomplish it were of a bolder strain. Lady Bab affected no delicacy, she laughed at reserve, she had shaken hands with decorum.

She held the *noisy* tenor of her way.

with no assumed refinement; and, so far from shielding her designs behind the mask of decency, she disdained the obsolete expedient.—Her plans succeeded the more infallibly, because

her frankness defeated all suspicion. A man could never divine that such gay, and open assaults could have their foundation in design, and he gave her full credit for artless simplicity, at the moment she was catching him in her toils. If she now and then had gone too far, and by a momentary oversight or excessive levity had betrayed too much, with infinite address she would make a crane-neck turn, and fall to discussing, not without ability, some moral or theological topic. Thus she affected to establish the character of a woman, thoughtless through wit, indiscreet through simplicity, but religious on principle.

As there is no part of the appendage to a wife, which I have ever more dreaded than a Machiavelian mother, I should have been deaf to wit and blind to beauty, and dead to advances, had their united batteries been directed against me. But I had not the ambition to aspire to that honour. I was much too low a mark for her lofty aim. She had a natural antipathy to every name that could not be found in the red book. She equally shrunk from untitled opulence and indigent nobility. She knew by instinct if a younger son was in the room, and by a petrifying look checked his most distant approaches; while with her powerful spells she never failed to draw within her magic circle the splendid heir, and charm him to her purpose.

Highly born herself, she had early been married to a rich man of inferior rank, for the sake of a large settlement. Her plan was, that her daughters, (who, by the way, are modest and estimable,) should find in the man they married, still higher birth than her own, and more riches than her husband's.

It was a curious speculation to compare these two friends, and to observe how much less the refined manœuvres of Mrs. Fentham answered, than the open assaults of the intrepid Lady Bab. All the intricacies and labyrinths which the former has been so skilful and so patient in weaving, have not yet enthralled one captive, while the composed effrontery, the affecting to take for granted the offer which was never meant to be made, and treating that as concluded, which was never so much as intended, drew the unconscious victim of the other into the trap, before he knew it was set.—The depth of her plot consisting in not appearing to have any. It was novelty in intrigue. An originality which defied all competition, and in which no imitator has any chance of success.

CHAP. X.

SIR John carried me one morning to call on Lady Denham, a dowager of fashion, who had grown old in the trammels of the world. Though she seems resolved to die in the harness, yet she piques herself on being very religious, and no one inveighs against infidelity or impiety with more pointed censure. "She has a grandaughter," said Sir John, "who lives with her, and whom she has trained to walk precisely in her own steps, and which, she thinks, *is the way she should go.* The girl," added he, smiling, "is well looking, and will have a handsome fortune, and I am persuaded that, as my friend, I could procure you a good reception."

We were shewn into her dressing room, where we found her with a book lying open before her. From a glance which I caught of the large black letter, I saw it was a *Weeks Preparation.* This book it seems constantly lay open before her from breakfast till dinner, at this season. It was Passion week. But as this is the room in which she sees all her morning visitors, to none of whom is she ever denied, even at this period of retreat, she could only pick up momentary snatches of reading in the short intervals between one person bowing out and another courtseying in. Miss Denham sat by, painting flowers.

Sir John asked her Ladyship, if she would go *and dine* in a family way with Lady Belfield. She

drew up, looked grave, and said with much solemnity, that she should never think of dining abroad at this holy season. Sir John said, "as we have neither cards nor company, I thought you might as well have eaten your chicken in my house as in your own." But though she thought it a sin to dine with a sober family, she made herself amends for the sacrifice, by letting us see that her heart was brimful of the world, pressed down and running over. She indemnified herself for her abstinence from its diversions, by indulging in the only pleasures which she thought compatible with the sanctity of the season, uncharitable gossip, and unbounded calumny. She would not touch a card for the world, but she played over to Sir John the whole game of the preceding Saturday night; told him by what a shameful inattention her partner had lost the odd trick; and that she should not have been beaten after all, had not her adversary, she verily believed, contrived to look over her hand.

Sir John seized the only minute, in which we were alone, to ask her to add a guinea to a little sum he was collecting for a poor tradesman with a large family, who had been burnt out a few nights ago. "His wife," added he, "was your favourite maid Dixon, and both are deserving people."—"Ah, poor Dixon! She was always unlucky," replied the Lady. "How could they be so careless? surely they might have put the fire out sooner. They should not have let it get a-head. I wonder people are not more active."—"It is too late to enquire about that," said Sir John, "the question now is, not how their loss might have been prevented, but how it may be

repaired."—"I am really quite sorry," said she, that I can give you nothing. I have had so many calls lately, that my charity purse is completely exhausted—and that abominable Property-tax makes me quite a beggar."

While she was speaking, I glanced on the open leaf at, "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be ready to give;" and directing my eye further it fell on, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked." These were the awful passages which formed a part of her *Preparation*, and this was the practical use she made of them!

A dozen persons of both sexes "had their exits and their entrances" during our stay; for the scene was so strange and the character so new to me, that I felt unwilling to stir. Among other visitors, was Signor Squallini, a favourite opera singer, whom she patronized. Her face was lighted up with joy, at sight of him. He brought her an admired new air in which he was preparing himself, and sung a few notes, that she might say she had heard it the first. She felt all the dignity of the privilege, and extolled the air with all the phrases, cant and rapture of *dilettanteism*.

After this, she drew a paper from between the leaves of her still open book, which she shewed him. It contained a list of all the company she had engaged to attend his benefit. "I will call on some others," said she, "to-morrow after prayers, I am sorry this is a week in which I cannot see my friends at their assemblies, but on Sunday you know it will be over, and I shall have my house full in the evening. Next Monday will be Easter, *and I shall* be at our dear Duchess's private masquerade, and then I hope to see and engage the

whole world.—Here are ten guineas." said she, in a half whisper to the obsequious Signor, "you may mention what I gave for *my* ticket, and it may set the fashion going." She then pressed a ticket on Sir John and another on me. He declined, saying with great *sang froid*, "You know we are *Handelians*." What excuse I made I do not well know; I only know that I saved my ten guineas with a very bad grace, but felt bound in conscience to add them to what I had before subscribed to poor Dixon.

Hitherto I had never seen the gnat-strainer, and the camel-swallower, so strikingly exemplified. And it is observable how forcibly the truth of Scripture is often illustrated by those who live in the boldest opposition to it. If you have any doubt while you are reading, go into the world and your belief will be confirmed.

As we took our leave, she followed us to the door, I hoped it was with the guinea for the fire; but she only whispered Sir John, though he did not go himself, to prevail on such and such ladies to go to Squallini's benefit. "Pray do," said she, "it will be charity. Poor fellow! he is sadly out at elbows, he has a fine liberal spirit, and can hardly make his large income do."

When we got into the street we admired the splendid chariot and laced liveries of this *indigent* professor, for whom our charity had been just solicited, and whose "liberal spirit" my friend assured me, consisted in sumptuous living, and the indulgence of every fashionable vice.

I could not restrain my exclamations as soon as we got out of hearing. To Sir John, the scene was amusing, but to him it had lost the interest

of novelty. "I have known her ladyship about twelve years," said he, "and of course have witnessed a dozen of these annual paroxysms of devotion. I am persuaded that she is a gainer by them on her own principle, that is, in the article of pleasure. This short periodical abstinence whets her appetite to a keener relish for suspended enjoyment; and while she fasts from amusements, her blinded conscience enjoys a feast of self-gratulation. She feeds on the remembrance of her self-denial, even after she has returned to those delights which she thinks her retreat has fairly purchased. She considers religion as a system of pains and penalties, by the voluntary enduring of which, for a short time, she shall compound for all the indulgences of the year. She is persuaded that something must be annually forborne, in order to make her peace. After these periodical atonements, the Almighty being in her debt, will be obliged at last to pay her with heaven. This composition, which rather brings her in on the creditor side, not only quiets her conscience for the past, but enables her joyfully to enter on a new score."

I asked Sir John, how Lady Belfield *could* associate with a woman of a character so opposite to her own? "What can we do?" said he, "we cannot be singular. We must conform *a little* to the world in which we live." Trusting to his extreme good-nature, and fired at the scene to which I had been a witness, I ventured to observe that non-conformity to such a world as that of which this lady was a specimen, was the very criterion of the religion taught by Him who had declared

of pre-eminent distinction that " his king-
is not of this world."
u are a young man," answered he mildly,
this delicacy and these prejudices would
rear off, if you were to live some time in
ld."—" My dear Sir John," said I, warmly,
e grace of God, I never *will* live in the
; at least, I will never associate with that
f it, whose society would be sure to wear
it delicacy and remove those prejudices.
his is retaining all the worst part of popery.
s the abstinence without the devotion; the
d observance without the interior humilia-
the suspending of sin, not only without
sign of forsaking it, but with a fixed reso-
of returning to it, and of encreasing the
by the forbearance. Nay, the sins she re-
n order to mitigate the horrors of forbear-
are as bad as those she lays down. A post-
sin, which is fully intended to be resumed,
nuch worse than a sin persisted in, as deli-
: hypocrisy is worse than the impulse of pas-
I desire not a more explicit comment on
, which I was once almost tempted to think
t ; I mean, the greater facility of the en-
: of gross and notorious offenders into heaven
of these formalists. No ! If Miss Denham
sole heiress to Crœsus, and joined the beauty
:opatra to the wit of Sappho, I never would
ct myself with a disciple of that school."
low many ways there are of being unhappy !"
ir John, as we returned one day from a ride
d taken some miles out of town, to call on a
l of his. " Mr. Stanhope, whom we have just
:d, is a man of great elegance of mind. His

early life was passed in liberal studies, and in the best company. But his fair prospects were blasted by a disproportionate marriage. He was drawn in by a vanity too natural to young men, that of fancying himself preferred by a woman, who had no one recommendation but beauty. To be admired by her, whom all his acquaintance admired, gratified his *amour propre*. He was overcome by her marked attentions so far as to declare himself, without knowing her real disposition. It was some time before his prepossession allowed him to discover that she was weak and ill-informed, selfish and bad tempered. What she wanted in understanding, she made up in spirit. The more she exacted, the more he submitted; and her demands grew in proportion to his sacrifices. My friend, with patient affection, struggled for a long time to raise her character, and to enlighten her mind; but finding that she pouted whenever he took up a book, and that she even hid the newspaper before he had read it, complaining that he preferred any thing to her company; the softness of his temper and his habitual indolence at length prevailed.—His better judgment sunk in the hopeless contest. For a quiet life, he has submitted to a disgraceful life. The compromise has not answered. He has incurred the degradation, which, by a more spirited conduct, he might have avoided, and has missed the quiet which he sacrificed his dignity to purchase. He compassionates her folly, and continues to translate her wearisome interruptions into the flattering language of affection.

"In compliment to her, no less than in justification of his own choice, he has persuaded himself that all women are pretty much alike. That in

point of capacity, disposition, and knowledge he has but drawn the common lot, with the balance in his favour, of strong affection and unsullied virtue. He hardly ever sees his fine library, which is the object of his supreme aversion, but wastes his days in listless idleness and his evenings at cards, the only thing in which she takes a lively interest. His fine mind is, I fear, growing mean and disingenuous. The gentleness of his temper leads him not only to sacrifice his peace, but to infringe on his veracity in order to keep her quiet.

"All the entertainment he finds at dinner is a recapitulation of the faults of her maids, or the impertinence of her footmen, or the negligence of her gardener. If to please her he joins in the censure, she turns suddenly about, and defends them. If he vindicates them, she insists on their immediate dismission; and no sooner are they irrevocably discharged, than she is continually dwelling on their perfections, and then it is only their successors who have any faults.

"He is now so afraid of her driving out his few remaining old servants, if she sees his partiality for them, that in order to conceal it, he affects to reprimand them as the only means for them to secure her favour. Thus the integrity of his heart is giving way to a petty duplicity, and the openness of his temper to shabby artifices. He could submit to the loss of his comfort, but sensibly feels the diminution of his credit. The loss of his usefulness too is a constant source of regret. She will not even suffer him to act as a magistrate, lest her doors should be beset with vagabonds, and her house dirtied by men of business. If he chance to commend a dish he has tasted at

a friend's house—Yes, every body's things are good but her's—she can never please—he had better always dine abroad, if nothing is fit to be eaten at home.

"Though poor Stanhope's conduct is so correct, and his attachment to his wife so notorious, he never ventures to commend any thing that is said or done by another woman. She has, indeed, no definite object of jealousy, but feels an uneasy, vague sensation of envy at any thing or person he admires. I believe she would be jealous of a fine day, if her husband praised it.

"If a tale reaches her ears of a wife who has failed of her duty, or if the public papers record a divorce, then she awakens her husband to a sense of his superior happiness, and her own irreproachable virtue. O Charles, the woman who, reposing on the laurels of her boasted virtue, allows herself to be a disobliging, a peevish, a gloomy discontented companion, defeats one great end of the institution, which is happiness. The wife who violates the marriage vow, is indeed more criminal; but the very magnitude of her crime emancipates her husband; while she who makes him not dishonourable, but wretched, fastens on him a misery for life, from which no laws can free him, and under which religion alone can support him."

We continued talking till we reached home, on the multitude of marriages in which the parties are "joined not matched," and where the term *union* is a miserable misnomer. I endeavoured to turn all these new acquaintances to account, and considered myself at every visit I made, as taking a lesson for my own conduct. I beheld the

miscarriages of others, not only with concern for the individual, but as beacons to light me on my way. It was no breach of charity to use the aberrations of my acquaintance for the purpose of making my own course more direct. I took care, however, never to lose sight of the humbling consideration that my own deviations were equally liable to become the object of their animadversion, if the same motive had led them to the same scrutiny.

I remained some weeks longer in town indulging myself in all its safe sights, and all its sober pleasures. I examined whatever was new in art, or curious in science. I found out the best pictures, saw the best statues, explored the best museums, heard the best speakers in the courts of law, the best preachers in the church, and the best orators in parliament; attended the best lectures, and visited the best company, in the most correct, though not always the most fashionable sense of the term. I associated with many learned, sensible, and some pious men, commodities, with which London, with all its faults, abounds, perhaps, more than any other place on the habitable globe. I became acquainted with many agreeable, well informed, valuable women, with a few who even seemed in a good measure to live above the world while they were living in it.

There is a large class of excellent female characters, who, on account of that very excellence, are little known, because to be known is not their object. Their ambition has a better taste. They pass through life honoured and respected in their own small, but not unimportant sphere, and approved by him, "whose they are, and whom they

serve," though their faces are hardly known in promiscuous society. If they occasion little sensation abroad, they produce much happiness at home. And when once a woman who has "all appliances and means to get it," *can* withstand the intoxication of the flatterer, and the adoration of the fashionable; *can* conquer the fondness for public distinction, *can* resist the temptations of that magic circle to which she is courted, and in which she is qualified to shine—this is indeed a trial of firmness; a trial in which those who have never been called to resist themselves, can hardly judge of the merit of resistance in others.

These are the women who bless, dignify, and truly adorn society. The painter indeed does not make his fortune by their sitting to him; the jeweller is neither brought into vogue by furnishing their diamonds, nor undone by not being paid for them; the prosperity of the milliner does not depend on affixing their name to a cap or a colour; the poet does not celebrate them; the novelist does not dedicate to them; but they possess the affection of their husbands, the attachment of their children, the esteem of the wise and good, and above all they possess *his* favour, "whom to know is life eternal." Among these I doubt not I might have found objects highly deserving of my heart, but the injunction of my father was a sort of panoply which guarded it.

I am persuaded that such women compose a larger portion of the sex, than is generally allowed. It is not the number, but the noise which makes a sensation, and a set of fair dependent young creatures who are every night forced, some of them reluctantly upon the public eye; and a bevy

of faded matrons rouged and repaired for an ungrateful public, dead to their blandishments, do not compose the whole female world! I repeat it —a hundred amiable women, who are living in the quiet practice of their duties, and the modest exertion of their talents, do not fill the public eye, or reach the public ear, like one aspiring leader, who, hungering for observation, and disdaining censure, dreads not abuse but oblivion: who thinks it more glorious to head a little phalanx of fashionable followers, than to hold out, as from her commanding eminence, and imposing talents she might have done, a shining example of all that is great, and good, and dignified in woman. These self-appointed queens maintain an absolute but ephemeral empire over that little *fantastic aristocracy* which they call the world—Admiration besets them, crowds attend them, conquests follow them, inferiors imitate them, rivals envy them, newspapers extol them, sonnets deify them. A few ostentatious charities are opposed as a large atonement for a *few amiable weaknesses*, while the unpaid tradesman is exposed to ruin by their vengeance if he refuse to trust them, and to a gaol if he continue to do it.

CHAP. XI.

THE three days previous to my leaving London were passed with Sir John and Lady Belfield. Knowing I was on the wing for Hampshire, they promised to make their long intended visit to Stanley Grove during my stay there.

On the first of these days, we were agreeably surprised at the appearance of Dr. Barlow, an old friend of Sir John, and the excellent rector of Mr. Stanley's parish. Being obliged to come to town on urgent business for a couple of days, he was charged to assure me of the cordial welcome, which awaited me at the Grove. I was glad to make this early acquaintance with this highly respectable divine. I made a thousand enquiries about his neighbours, and expressed my impatience to know more of a family, in whose characters I already felt a more than common interest.

"Sir," said he, "if you set me talking of Mr. Stanley, you must abide by the consequences of your indiscretion, and bear with the loquacity of which that subject never fails to make me guilty. He is a greater blessing to me as a friend, and to my parish as an example and a benefactor than I can describe." I assured him that he could not be too minute in speaking of a man, whom I had been early taught to admire, by that exact judge of merit, my late father.

"Mr. Stanley," said the worthy Doctor, "is about six and forty, his admirable wife is about six or seven years younger. He passed the early part of his life in London, in the best society. His

commerce with the world, was to a mind like his, all pure gain; for he brought away from it all the good it had to give, without exchanging for it one particle of his own integrity. He acquired the air, manners, and sentiments of a gentleman, without any sacrifice of his sincerity. Indeed he may be said to have turned his knowledge of the world to a religious account, for it has enabled him to recommend religion to those, who do not like it well enough, to forgive, for its sake, the least aukwardness of gesture, or inelegance of manner.

"When I became acquainted with the family," continued he, "I told Mrs. Stanley that I was afraid her husband hurt religion in one sense, as much as he recommended it in another; for that some men who would forgive him his piety for the sake of his agreeableness, would be led to dislike religion more than ever in other men, in whom the jewel was not so well set. "We should like your religious men well enough," will they say, "if they all resembled Stanley." Whereas the truth is, they do not so much *like* Mr. Stanley's religion as *bear* with it for the pleasure which his other qualities afford them. She assured me, that this was not altogether the case, for that his other qualities having pioneer'd his way, and hewed down the prejudices which the reputation of piety naturally raises, his endeavours to be useful to them were much facilitated, and he not only kept the ground he had gained, but was often able to turn this influence over his friends to a better account than they had intended. He converted their admiration of him into arms against their own errors.

"He possesses in perfection," continued Dr. Barlow, "that sure criterion of abilities, a great

power over the minds of his acquaintance, and has in a high degree that rare talent, the art of conciliation without the aid of flattery. I have seen more men brought over to his opinion by a management derived from his knowledge of mankind, and by a principle which forbade his ever using this knowledge but for good purposes, than I ever observed in any other instance; and this without the slightest deviation from his scrupulous probity.

"He is master of one great advantage in conversation, that of not only knowing *what* to say that may be useful, but exactly *when* to say it; in knowing when to press a point and when to forbear; in his sparing the self-love of a vain man, whom he wishes to reclaim by contriving to make him feel himself wrong without making him appear ridiculous. The former he knows is easily pardoned, the latter never. He has studied the human heart long enough to know that to wound pride is not the way to cure, but to inflame it; and that exasperating self-conceit, will never subdue it. He seldom, I believe, goes into company without an earnest desire to be useful to some one in it; but if circumstances are adverse; if the *mollia tempora fandi* does not present itself; he knows he should lose more than they would gain, by trying to make the occasion when he does not find it. And I have often heard him say, that when he cannot benefit others, or be benefited by them, he endeavours to benefit himself by the disappointment, which does his own mind as much good by humbling him with the sense of his own uselessness, as the subject he wished to have introduced, might have done them.

"*The death* of his only son about six years ago, *who had just* entered his eighth year, is the only

ruption his family have had to a felicity so
oken, that I told Mr. Stanley some such cala-
was necessary to convince him that he was
o be put off with so poor a portion as this
d has to give. I added, that I should have
tempted to doubt his being in the favour of
if he had totally escaped chastisement. A
ımstance which to many parents would have
ly aggravated the blow, rather lightened it to
The boy, had he lived to be of age, was to
had a large independent fortune from a
nt relation, which will now go to a remote
:h, unless there should be another son. "This
:h," said he to me, "might have proved the
snare, and this independence his destruction.
'ho does all things well, has afflicted the pa-
, but he has saved the child." The loss of an
son, however, sat heavy on his heart, but it
he means of enabling him to glorify God by
ıbmission, I should rather say, by his acqui-
ıce. Submission is only yielding to what we
ɔt help. Acquiescence is a more sublime
of resignation. It is a conviction that the
e will is holy, just, and good. He one day
:o me, "we were too fond of the mercy, but
ufficiently grateful for it. We loved him so
onately that we might have forgotten who be-
ɔd him. To preserve us from this temptation,
in great mercy withdrew him. Let us turn
yes from the one blessing we have lost, to the
:less mercies which are continued to us, and
ially to the hand which confers them; to the
which, if we continue to murmur, may strip
our remaining blessings."
cannot," continued Dr. Barlow, "make a

higher eulogium of Mrs. Stanley than to say, she is every way worthy of the husband whose happiness she makes. They have a large family of lovely daughters of all ages. Lucilla, the eldest, is near nineteen; you would think me too poetical were I to say she adorns every virtue with every grace; and yet I should only speak the simple truth. Phœbe, who is just turned of fifteen, has not less vivacity and sweetnes than her sister, but, from her extreme naiveté and warm-heartedness, she has somewhat less discretion; and her father says, that her education has afforded him, not less pleasure but more trouble, for the branches shot so fast as to call for more pruning."

Before I had time to thank the good Doctor for his interesting little narrative, a loud rap announced company. It was Lady Bab Lawless. With her usual versatility she plunged at once into every subject with every body. She talked to Lady Belfield of the news and her nursery, of poetry with Sir John, of politics with me, and religion with Dr. Barlow. She talked well upon most of these points, and not ill upon any of them. For she had the talent of embellishing subjects of which she knew but little, and a kind of conjectural sagacity and rash dexterity, which prevented her from appearing ignorant, even when she knew nothing. She thought that a full confidence in her own powers was the sure way to raise them in the estimation of others, and it generally succeeded.

Turning suddenly to Lady Belfield, she said, "Pray my dear, look at my flowers." "They are beautiful roses indeed," said Lady Belfield, "and as exquisitely exact as if they were artificial."—

Which in truth they are," replied Lady Bab.— Your mistake is a high compliment to them, but ot higher than they deserve. Look especially at hese roses in my cap. You positively shall go and et some at the same place." "Indeed," said ady Belfield, "I am thinking of laying aside flow- rs, though my children are hardly old enough to ake them." "What affectation!" replied Lady ab, "why you are not above two or three nd thirty; I am almost as old again, and yet I on't think of giving up flowers to my children, or y grand children, who will be soon wanting hem. Indeed, I only now wear *white* roses." I iscovered by this, that white roses made the same pproximation to sobriety in dress, that three tables nade to it in cards. "Seriously though," contin- ued Lady Bab, "you must and shall go and buy ome of Fanny's flowers. I need only tell you, it vill be the greatest charity you ever did, and then know you won't rest till you have been. A beau- iful girl maintains her dying mother by making nd selling flowers. Here is her direction," hrowing a card on the table. "Oh no this is not t, I have forgot the name, but it is within two loors of your hair-dresser, in what d'ye call he lane, just out of Oxford-Street. It is a poor niserable hole, but her roses are as bright s if they grew in the gardens of Armida." She ow rung the bell violently, saying she had over- tayed her time, though she had not been in the ouse ten minutes.

Next morning I attended Lady Belfield to the ex- ibition. In driving home through one of the arrow passages near Oxford-Street, I observed hat we were in the street where the poor flower-

maker lived. Lady Belfield directed her footman to enquire for the house. We went into it, and in a small but clean room, up three pair of stairs, we found a very pretty and very genteel young girl at work on her gay manufacture. The young woman presented her elegant performances with an air of uncommon grace and modesty.

She was the more interesting, because the delicacy of her appearance seemed to proceed from ill health, and a tear stood in her eye while she exhibited her works. "You do not seem well, my dear," said Lady Belfield, with a kindness which was natural to her. "I never care about my own health, madam," replied she, "but I fear my dear mother is dying." She stopped, and the tears which she had endeavoured to restrain now flowed plentifully down her cheeks. "Where is your mother child?" said Lady Belfield. "In the next room, madam." "Let us see her," said her Ladyship, "if it won't too much disturb her." So saying, she led the way, and I followed her.

We found the sick woman lying on a little poor, but clean bed, pale and emaciated, but she did not seem so near her end as Fanny's affection had made her apprehend. After some kind expressions of concern, Lady Belfield enquired into their circumstances, which she found were deplorable. "But for that dear girl, madam, I should have perished with want," said the good woman; "since our misfortunes, I have had nothing to support me but what she earns by making these flowers. She has ruined her own health, by sitting up the greatest part of the night to procure me necessaries, whilst she herself lives on a crust."

I was so affected with this scene, that I drew Lady Belfield into the next room; "If we cannot preserve the mother, at least let us save the daughter from destruction," said I; "you may command my purse." "I was thinking of the same thing." she replied. "Pray, my good girl, what sort of education have you had?" "O, madam," said she "one much too high for my situation. But my parents, intending to qualify me for a governess, as the safest way of providing for me, have had me taught every thing necessary for that employment. I have had the best masters, and I hope I have not misemployed my time." "How comes it then," said I, "that you were not placed out in some family?" "What, Sir! and leave my dear mother helpless and forlorn? I had rather live only on my tea and dry bread, which indeed I have done for many months, and supply her little wants, than enjoy all the luxuries in the world at a distance from her."

"What were your misfortunes occasioned by?" said I, while Lady Belfield was talking with the mother. "One trouble followed another, Sir," said she, "but what most completely ruined us, and sent my father to prison, and brought a paralytic stroke on my mother, was his being arrested for a debt of seven hundred pounds. This sum, which he had promised to pay, was long due to him for laces, and to my mother for millinery and fancy dresses, from a lady who has not paid it to this moment, and my father is dead, and my mother dying! this sum would have saved them both!"

She was turning away to conceal the excess of her grief, when a venerable clergyman entered the room. It was the rector of the parish, who came.

frequently to administer spiritual consolation to the poor woman. Lady Belfield knew him slightly, and highly respected his character. She took him aside, and questioned him as to the disposition and conduct of these people, especially the young woman. His testimony was highly satisfactory.—The girl, he said, had not only had an excellent education, but her understanding and principles were equally good. He added, that he reckoned her beauty among her misfortunes. It made good people afraid to take her into the house, and exposed her to danger from those of the opposite description.

I put my purse into Lady Belfield's hands, declining to make any present myself, lest, after the remark he had just made, I should incur the suspicions of the worthy clergyman.

We promised to call again the next day, and took our leave, but not till we had possessed ourselves of as many flowers as she could spare. I begged that we might stop and send some medical assistance to the sick woman, for though it was evident that all relief was hopeless, yet it would be a comfort to the affectionate girl's heart to know that nothing was omitted which might restore her mother.

CHAP. XII.

IN the evening we talked over our little adventure with Sir John, who entered warmly into the distresses of Fanny, and was inclined to adopt our opinion, that if her character and attainments stood the test of a strict inquiry, she might hereafter probably be transplanted into their family as governess. We were interrupted in the formation of this plan by a visit from Lady Melbury, the acknowledged queen of beauty and of ton. I had long been acquainted with her character, for her charms and her accomplishments were the theme of every man of fashion, and the envy of every modish woman.

She is one of those admired but pitiable characters, who, sent by Providence as an example to their sex, degrade themselves into a warning. Warm-hearted, feeling, liberal on the one hand; on the other vain, sentimental, romantic, extravagantly addicted to dissipation and expence, and with that union of contrarieties which distinguishes her, equally devoted to poetry and gaming, to liberality and injustice. She is too handsome to be envious, and too generous to have any relish for detraction, but she gives to excess into the opposite fault. As Lady Denham can detect blemishes in the most perfect, Lady Melbury finds perfections in the most depraved. From a judgment which cannot discriminate, a temper which will not censure, and a hunger for popularity, which can feed on the coarsest applause, she flat-

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ters egregiously and universally, on the principle of being paid back usuriously in the same coin. Prodigal of her beauty, she exists but on the homage paid to it from the drawing room at St. James's, to the mob at an election. Candor in her is as mischievous as calumny in others, for it buoys up characters which ought to sink. Not content with being blind to the bad qualities of her favourites, she invents good ones for them, and you would suppose her corrupt "little senate" was a choir of seraphims.

A recent circumstance related by Sir John was quite characteristical. Her favourite maid was dangerously ill, and earnestly begged to see her lady, who always had loaded her with favours. To all company she talked of the virtues of the poor Toinette, for whom she not only expressed, but felt real compassion. Instead of one apothecary who would have sufficed, two physicians were sent for; and she herself resolved to go up and visit her, as soon as she had finished setting to music an elegy on the death of her Java Sparrow. Just as she had completed it, she received a fresh intreaty to see her maid, and was actually got to the door in order to go up stairs, when the milliner came in with such a distracting variety of beautiful new things, that there was no possibility of letting them go till she had tried every thing on, one after the other. This took up no little time. To determine which she should keep and which return, where all was so attractive, took up still more. After numberless vicissitudes and fluctuations of racking thought, it was at length decided she should take the whole. The milliner with-

drew; the lady went up—Toinette had just expired.

I found her manners no less fascinating than her person. With all her modish graces, there was a tincture of romance and an appearance of softness and sensibility which gave her the variety of two characters. She was the enchanting woman of fashion, and the elegiac muse.

Lady Belfield had taken care to cover her work table with Fanny's flowers, with a view to attract any chance visitor. Lady Melbury admired them excessively. "You must do more than admire them," said Lady Belfield, "you must buy and recommend." She then told her the affecting scene we had witnessed, and described the amiable girl who supported the dying mother by making these flowers. "It is quite enchanting," continued she, resolving to attack Lady Melbury in her own sentimental way, "to see this sweet girl twisting rose-buds, and forming hyacinths into bouquets." "Dear, how charming!" exclaimed Lady Melbury, "it is really quite touching. I will make a subscription for her, and write at the head of the list a melting description of her case. She shall bring me all her flowers, and as many more as she can make. But no, we will make a party, and go and see her. You shall carry me. How interesting to see a beautiful creature making roses and hyacinths! her delicate hands and fair complexion must be amazingly set off by the contrast of the bright flowers. If it were a coarse looking girl spinning hemp, to be sure one should pity her, but it would not be half so moving. It will be delightful. I will call on you to-morrow, exactly at two,

and carry you all. Perhaps," whispered she to Lady Belfield, "I may work up the circumstances into a sonnet. Do think of a striking title for it. On second thoughts, the sonnet shall be sent about with the subscription, and I'll get a pretty vignette to suit it."

"That fine creature," said Sir John, in an accent of compassion, as she went out, "was made for nobler purposes. How grievously does she fall short of the high expectations her early youth had raised! Oh! what a sad return does she make to Providence for his rich and varied bounties! Vain of her beauty, lavish of her money, careless of her reputation; associating with the worst company, yet formed for the best; living on the adulation of parasites, whose understanding she despises! I grieve to compare what she is with what she might have been, had she married a man of spirit, who would prudently have guided and tenderly have restrained her. He has ruined her and himself by his indifference and easiness of temper. Satisfied with knowing how much she is admired and he envied, he never thought of reproving or restricting her. He is proud of her, but has no particular delight in her company, and trusting to her honour, lets her follow her own devices, while he follows his. She is a striking instance of the eccentricity of that bounty which springs from mere sympathy and feeling. Her charity requires stage effect; objects that have novelty, and circumstances which as Mr. Bayes says, "elevate and surprise." She lost, when an infant, her mother, a woman of sense and piety; who, had she lived, would have formed the

ductile mind of the daughter, turned her various talents into other channels, and raised her character to the elevation it was meant to reach."

"How melancholy a consideration is it," said I, "that so superior a woman should live so much below her high destination! She is doubtless utterly destitute of any thought of religion."

"You are much mistaken," replied Sir John, "I will not indeed venture to pronounce that she entertains much *thought* about it; but she by no means denies its truth, nor neglects occasionally to exhibit its outward and visible signs. She has not yet completely forgotten

All that the nurse and all the priest have taught.

I do not think that, like Lady Denham, she considers it as a communication, but she preserves it as a habit. A religious exercise, however, never interferes with a worldly one. They are taken up in succession, but with this distinction, the worldly business is to be done, the religious one is not altogether to be left undone. She has a moral chemistry which excels in the amalgamation of contradictory ingredients. On a Sunday at Melbury castle if by any strange accident she and her lord happen to be there together, she first reads him a sermon, and plays at cribbage with him the rest of the evening. In town one Sunday when she had a cold she wrote a tract on the sacrament, for her maids, and then sat up all night at deep play. She declared if she had been successful she would have given her winnings to charity; but as she lost some hundreds, she said, she could now with a safe conscience borrow that sum from her charity purse, which

she had hoped to add to it, to pay her debt of honour."

Next day, within two hours of her appointed time, she came, and was complimented by Sir John on her punctuality. "Indeed," said she, "I *am* rather late, but I met with such a fascinating German novel, that it positively chained me to my bed till past three. I assure you, I never lose time by not rising. In the course of a few winters I have exhausted half Hookham's catalogue, before some of my acquaintance are awake, or I myself out of bed."

We soon stopped at the humble door of which we were in search. Sir John conducted Lady Melbury up the little winding stairs. I assisted Lady Belfield. We reached the room, where Fanny was just finishing a beautiful bunch of jonquils. "How picturesque," whispered Lady Melbury to me!—"Do lend me your pencil; I must take a sketch of that sweet girl with the jonquils in her hand."—"My dear creature," continued she, "you must not only let me have these, but you must make me twelve dozen more flowers as fast as possible, and be sure let me have a great many sprigs of jessamine and myrtle." Then snatching up a wreath of various coloured geraniums—"I must try this on my head by the glass." So saying she ran into an adjoining room, the door of which was open; Lady Belfield having before stolen into it to speak to the poor invalid.

As soon as Lady Melbury got into the room, she uttered a loud shriek. Sir John and I ran in, and were shocked to find her near fainting. "Oh, Belfield," said she, "this is a trick, and a most cruel one! Why did you not tell me where your

were bringing me? Why did you not tell me the people's name?"—"I have never heard it myself," said Sir John, "on my honour I do not understand you."—"You know as much of the woman as I know," said Lady Belfield. "Alas, much more," cried she, as fast as her tears would give her leave to speak. She retired to the window for air, wringing her hands, and called for a glass of water to keep her from fainting. I turned to the sick woman for an explanation: I saw her countenance much changed.

"This Sir," said she, "is the lady, whose debt of seven hundred pounds ruined me, and was the death of my husband." I was thunderstruck, but went to assist Lady Melbury, who implored Sir John to go home with her instantly, saying, her coach should come back for us. "But, dear Lady Belfield, do lend me twenty guineas, I have not a shilling about me."—"Then, my dear Lady Melbury," said Lady Belfield, "how *could* you order twelve dozen expensive flowers?"—"Oh," said she, "I did not mean to have paid for them till next year."—"And how," replied Lady Belfield, "could the debt which was not to have been paid for a twelvemonth have relieved the pressing wants of a creature, who must pay ready money for her materials? However, as you are so distressed, we will contrive to do without your money."—"I would pawn my diamond necklace directly," returned she, but speaking lower, "to own the truth, it is already in the jeweller's hands, and I wear a paste necklace of the same form."

Sir John knowing I had been at my banker's

that morning, gave me such a significant look as restrained my hand, which was already on my pocket-book. In great seeming anguish, she gave Sir John her hand, who conducted her to her coach. As he was leading her down stairs, she solemnly declared she would never again run in debt, never order more things than she wanted, and above all, would never play while she lived. She was miserable, because she durst not ask Lord Melbury to pay this woman, he having already given her money three times for the purpose, which she had lost at Faro. Then retracting, she protested, if ever she *did* touch a card again, it should be for the sole purpose of getting something to discharge this debt. Sir John earnestly conjured her not to lay "that flattering unction to her soul," but to convert the present vexation into an occasion of felicity, by making it the memorable and happy æra of abandoning a practice, which injured her fortune, her fame, her principles, and her peace. "Poor thing," said Sir John, when he repeated this to us,

> Ease will recant
> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

"In an interval of weeping, she told me," added he, "that she was to be at the opera to-night. To the opera, faro will succeed, and to-morrow probably the diamond earrings will go to Grey's in pursuit of the necklace."

Lady Belfield enquired of Fanny how it happened that Lady Melbury, who talked with *her*, without surprize or emotion, discovered so much of both at the bare sight of her mother. The girl explained this by saying, that she had never been

in the way while they lived in Bond-street, when her ladyship used to come, having been always employed in an upper room, or attending her masters.

Before we parted, effectual measures were taken for the comfortable subsistence of the sick mother, and for alleviating the sorrows, and lightening the labours of the daughter, and next morning I set out on my journey for Stanley Grove, Sir John and Lady Belfield promising to follow me in a few weeks.

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As soon as I got into my post-chaise, and fairly turned my back on London, I fell into a variety of reflections on the persons with whom I had been living. In this soliloquy, I was particularly struck with that discrepancy of characters, all of which are yet included under the broad comprehensive appellation of *Christians*. I found that though all differed widely from each other, they differed still more widely from that rule by which professed to walk. Yet not one of these char- was considered as disreputable. There one that was prophane or profligate. Not would not in conversation have defended ity if its truth had been attacked. Not derided or even neglected its forms; in her own class would not have passed us. Yet how little had any one of them he profession she adopted! Of Mrs. rs. Fentham, Lady Bab Lawless, Lady Lady Melbury, which of them would en startled had her Christianity been

called in question? Yet how merely speculative was the religion of even the most serious among them! How superficial, or inconsistent, or mistaken, or hollow, or hypocritical, or self-deceiving was that of all the others! Had either of them been asked from what source she drew her religion, she would indignantly have answered, from the Bible. Yet if we compare the copy with the model, the Christian with Christianity, how little can we trace the resemblance! In what particular did their lives imitate the life of Him *who pleased not himself*, who *did the will of his Father*; who *went about doing good?* How irreconcileable is their faith with the principles which He taught! How dissimilar their practice with the precepts He delivered! How inconsistent their lives with the example he bequeathed! How unfounded their hope of heaven, if an entrance into heaven be restricted to those who are *like minded with Christ*.

CHAP. XIII.

My father had been early in life intimately onnected with the family of Mr. Stanley. Though is gentleman was his junior by several years, et there subsisted between them such a simi- rity of tastes, sentiment, views, and principles, at they lived in the closest friendship; and both eir families having in the early part of their lives sided in London, the occasions of that thorough utual knowledge that grows out of familiar in- rcourse, were much facilitated. I remembered r. Stanley, when I was a very little boy, paying annual visit to my father, at the Priory, and I ad retained an imperfect but pleasing impression f his countenance and engaging manners.

Having had a large estate left him in Hampshire, e settled there on his marriage; an intercourse f letters had kept up the mutual attachment be- ween him and my father. On the death of each arent, I had received a cordial invitation to come nd soothe my sorrows in his society. My father njoined me that one of my first visits after his eath, should be to the Grove; and in truth, I now onsidered my Hampshire engagement as the *onne bouche* of my southern excursion.

I reached Stanley Grove before dinner, I found spacious mansion, suited to the ample fortune nd liberal spirit of its possessor. I was highly ratified with fine forest scenery in the approach the park. The house had a noble appearance

without; and within, it was at once commodious and elegant. It stood on the south side of a hill, nearer the bottom than the summit, and was sheltered on the north-east by a fine old wood. The park, though it was not very extensive, was striking from the beautiful inequality of the ground, which was richly clothed with the most picturesque oaks I ever saw, interspersed with stately beeches. The grounds were laid out in good taste, but though the hand of modern improvement was visible, the owner had in one instance spared

"The obsolete prolixity of shade,"

for which the most interesting of poets so pathetically pleads. The poet's plea had saved the avenue.

I was cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley; and by that powerful and instantaneous impression which fine sense and good breeding, joined to high previous veneration of character, produce on the feelings of the guest, I at once felt myself at home. All the preliminaries of gradual acquaintance were in a manner superseded, and I soon experienced that warm and affectionate esteem, which seemed scarcely to require intercourse to strengthen, or time to confirm it. Mr. Stanley had only a few minutes to present me to his lady and two lovely daughters, before we were summoned to dinner, to which a considerable party had been invited; for the neighbourhood was populous and rather polished.

The conversation after dinner was rational, animated, and instructive. I observed that Mr. Stanley lost no opportunity which fairly offered, for

suggesting useful reflections. But what chiefly struck me in his manner of conversing was, that without ever pressing religion unseasonably into the service, he had the talent of making the most ordinary topics subservient to instruction, and of extracting some profitable hint, or striking out some important light, from subjects, which in ordinary hands would have been unproductive of improvement. It was evident that piety was the predominating principle of his mind, and that he was consulting its interests as carefully when prudence made him forbear to press it, as when propriety allowed him to introduce it. This piety was rather visible in the sentiment than the phrase. He was of opinion that bad taste could never advance the interests of Christianity. And he gave less offence to worldly men, than most religious people I have known, because though he would, on no human consideration, abate one atom of zeal, or lower any doctrine, nor disguise any truth, nor palliate, nor trim, nor compromise, yet never contended for words or trifling distinctions. He thought it detracted from no man's piety to bring all his elegance of expression, his correctness of taste, and his accuracy of reasoning to the service of that cause, which lies the nearest to the heart of every Christian, and demands the best exertion of his best faculties.

He was also forward to promote subjects of practical use in the affairs of common life, suited to the several circumstances and pursuits of his guests. But he particularly rejoiced that there was so broad, and safe, and uninclosed a field as general literature. This he observed always supplies men

of education, with an ample refuge from all vulgar and dangerous and unproductive topics. "If we cannot," said he, "by friendly intercourse, always raise our principles, we may always keep our understanding in exercise; and those authors who supply so peccable a creature as man, with subjects of elegant and innocent discussion, I do not reckon among the lowest benefactors of mankind."

In my farther acquaintance with Mr. Stanley, I have sometimes observed with what address he has converted a merely moral passage to a religious purpose. I have known him, when conversing with a man, who would not have relished a more sacred authority, seize on a sentiment in Tully's Offices, for the lowest degree in his scale of morals, and then, gradually ascending, trace and exalt the same thought through Paley or Johnson, or Addison, or Bacon, till he has unsuspectedly landed his opponent in the pure ethics of the gospel, and surprised him into the adoption of a Christian principle.

As I had heard there was a fine little flock of children, I was surprised, and almost disappointed every time the door opened, not to see them appear, for I already began to take an interest in all that related to this most engaging family. The ladies having, to our great gratification, sat longer than is usual at most tables, at length obeyed the signal of the mistress of the house. They withdrew, followed by the Miss Stanleys,

With grace
Which won who saw to wish their stay.

After their departure, the conversation was not changed. There was no occasion; it could not be-

come more rational, and we did not desire that it should become less pure. Mrs. Stanley and her fair friends had taken their share in it with a good sense and delicacy which raised the tone of our society: and we did not give them to understand by a loud laugh before they were out of hearing, that we rejoiced in being emancipated from the restraint of their presence.

Mrs. Stanley is a graceful and elegant woman. Among a thousand other excellencies, she is distinguished for her judgment in adapting her discourse to the character of her guests, and for being singularly skilful in selecting her topics of conversation. I never saw a lady who possessed the talent of diffusing at her table, so much pleasure to those around her, without the smallest deviation from her own dignified purity. She asks such questions, as strangers may be likely to gain, at least not to lose, credit by answering; and she suits her interrogations to the kind of knowledge they may be supposed likely to possess. By this, two ends are answered: while she gives her guest an occasion of appearing to advantage, she puts herself in the way of gaining some information. From want of this discernment, I have known ladies ask a gentleman just arrived from the East Indies, questions about America: and others, from the absence of that true delicacy, which, where it exists, shews itself even on the smallest occasions, who have enquired of a person how he liked such a book, though she knew, that in the nature of things, there was no probability of his ever having heard of it. Thus assuming an ungenerous *superiority herself,* and mortifying another by a

sense of his own comparative ignorance. If there is any one at table who from his station has least claim to attention, he is sure to be treated with particular kindness by Mrs. Stanley, and the diffident never fail to be encouraged, and the modest to be brought forward, by the kindness and refinement of her attentions.

When we were summoned to the drawing room, I was delighted to see four beautiful children, fresh as health and gay as youth could make them, busily engaged with the ladies. One was romping; another singing; a third was shewing some drawings of birds, the natural history of which she seemed to understand; a fourth had spread a dissected map on the carpet, and had pulled down her eldest sister on the floor to shew her Copenhagen. It was an animating scene. I could have devoured the sweet creatures. I got credit with the little singer by helping her to a line which she had forgotten, and with the geographer by my superior acquaintance with the shores of the Baltic.

In the evening, when the company had left us, I asked Mrs. Stanley how she came so far to deviate from established custom as not to produce her children immediately after dinner? You must ask me, said Mrs. Stanley, smiling, for it was I who first ventured to suggest this bold innovation. I love my children fondly, but my children I have always at home; I have my friends but seldom; and I do not chuse that any portion of the time that I wish to dedicate to intellectual and social enjoyment, should be broken in upon by another, and *an interfering* pleasure, which I have always with-

in my reach. At the same time I like my children to see my friends. Company amuses, improves, and polishes them. I therefore consulted with Mrs. Stanley, how we could so manage, as to enjoy our friends without locking up our children. She recommended this expedient. The time, she said, spent by the ladies from their leaving the dining room till the gentlemen came in to tea, was often a little heavy, it was rather an interval of anticipation than of enjoyment. Those ladies who had not much *mind*, had soon exhausted their admiration of each other's worked muslins, and lace sleeves, and those who *had*, would be glad to rest it so agreeably. She therefore proposed to enliven that dull period by introducing the children.

"This little change has not only succeeded in our own family, but has been adopted by many of our neighbours. For ourselves, it has answered a double purpose. It not only delights the little things, but it delights them with less injury than the usual season of their appearance. Our children have always as much fruit as they like, after their own dinner; they do not therefore want or desire the fruits, the sweetmeats, the cakes and the wine with which the guests, in order to please mamma, are too apt to cram them. Besides, poor little dears, it mixes too much selfishness with the natural delight they have in seeing company, by connecting with it the idea of the good things they shall get. But by this alteration, we do all in our power to infuse a little disinterestedness into the pleasure they have in coming to us. We love them too tenderly, to crib their little enjoyments, so we give them two pleasures instead of

one, for they have their desert and our company in succession."

Though I do not approve of too great familiarity with servants, yet I think that to an old and faithful domestic, superior consideration is due. My attendant on my present tour had lived in our family from his youth, and had the care of me before I can remember. His fidelity and good sense, and I may add his piety, had obtained for him the privilege of free speaking. "Oh, sir," said he, when he came to attend me next morning, "we are got into the right house at last. Such a family! so godly! so sober! so charitable! 'Tis all of a piece here, Sir. Mrs. Comfit, the housekeeper, tells me that her master and mistress are the example of all the rich, and the refuge of all the poor in the neighbourhood. And as to Miss Lucilla, if the blessing of them that are ready to perish, can send any body to heaven, she will go there sure enough."

This rhapsody of honest Edwards warmed my heart, and put me in mind, that I had neglected to enquire after this worthy housekeeper, who had lived with my grandfather, and was at his death transplanted into the family of Mr. Stanley. I paid a visit, the first opportunity, to the good woman in her room, eager to learn more of a family who so much resembled my own parents, and for whom I had already conceived something more tender than mere respect.

I congratulated Mrs. Comfit on the happiness of living in so valuable a family. In return, she was even eloquent in their praises. "Her mistress," she said, "was a pattern for ladies, so

strict, and yet so kind! but now indeed Miss Lucilla has taken almost all the family cares from her mamma. The day she was sixteen, sir, that is about two years and a half ago, she began to inspect the household affairs a little, and as her knowledge increased, she took more and more upon her. Miss Phœbe will very soon be old enough to relieve her sister; but my mistress won't let her daughters have any thing to do with family affairs, till they are almost women grown, both for fear it should take them off from their learning, and also give them a low turn about eating and caring for niceties, and lead them into vulgar gossip and familiarity with servants. It is time enough, she says, when their characters are a little formed, they will then gain all the good and escape all the danger."

Seeing me listen with the most eager and delighted attention, the worthy woman proceeded. "In summer, sir, Miss Stanley rises at six, and spends two hours in her closet, which is stored with the best books. At eight she consults me on the state of provisions, and other family matters, and gives me a bill of fare, subject to the inspection of her mamma. The cook has great pleasure in acting under her direction, because she allows that miss understands when things are well done, and never finds fault in the wrong place; which, she says is a great mortification in serving ignorant ladies, who praise or find fault by chance; not according to the cook's performance, but their own humour. She looks over my accounts every week, which being kept so short, give her

but little trouble, and once a month she settles every thing with her mother.

"'Tis a pleasure, sir, to see how skilful she is in accounts! One can't impose upon her a farthing if one would: and yet she is so mild and so reasonable! and so quick at distinguishing what are mistakes, and what are wilful faults! Then she is so compassionate! It will be a heart-breaking day at the Grove, sir, whenever miss marries. When my master is sick, she writes his letters, reads to him, and assists her mamma in nursing him.

"After her morning's work, sir, does she come into company, tired and cross, as ladies do who have done nothing, or are but just up? No, she comes in to make breakfast for her parents, as fresh as a rose, and as gay as a lark. An hour after breakfast, she and my master read some learned books together. She then assists in teaching her little sisters, and never were children better instructed. One day in a week, she sets aside both for them and herself to work for the poor, whom she also regularly visits at their own cottages, two evenings in the week; for she says it would be troublesome and look ostentatious to have her father's doors crouded with poor people, neither could she get at their wants and their characters half so well as by going herself to their own houses. My dear mistress has given her a small room as a storehouse for clothing and books for her indigent neighbours. In this room each of the younger daughters, the day she is seven years old, has her own drawer, with her name written on it; and almost the only competition among

them is, whose shall be soonest filled with caps, aprons, and handkerchiefs. The working day is commonly concluded by one of these charitable visits. The dear creatures are loaded with their little work baskets, crammed with necessaries. This, sir, is the day,—and it is always looked forward to with pleasure by them all. Even little Celia, the youngest, who is but just turned of five, will come to me and beg for something good to put in her basket for poor Mary or Betty such a one. I wonder I do not see any thing of the little darlings; it is about the time they used to pay me a visit.

"On Sundays before church they attend the village school; when the week's pocket money, which has been carefully hoarded for the purpose, is produced for rewards to the most deserving scholars. And yet, sir, with all this, you may be in the house a month without hearing a word of the matter; it is all done so quietly; and when they meet at their meals they are more cheerful and gay than if they had been ever so idle."

Here Mrs. Comfit stopped, for just then, two sweet little cherry cheeked figures presented themselves at the door, swinging a straw basket between them, and crying out in a little begging voice, "pray, Mrs. Comfit, bestow your charity,—we want something coarse for the hungry, and something nice for the sick,—poor Dame Alice and her little grandaughter!" They were going on, but spying me, they coloured up to the ears, and ran away as fast as they could, though I did all in my power to detain them.

CHAP. XIV.

WHEN Miss Stanley came in to make breakfast, she beautifully exemplified the worthy housekeeper's description. I have sometimes seen young women, whose simplicity was destitute of elegance, and others in whom a too elaborate polish had nearly effaced their native graces: Lucilla appeared to unite the simplicity of nature to the refinement of good breeding. It was thus she struck me at the first sight. I forbore to form a decided opinion, till I had leasure to observe whether her mind fulfilled all that her looks promised.

Lucilla Stanley is rather perfectly elegant than perfectly beautiful. I have seen women as striking, but I never saw one so interesting. Her beauty is countenance: it is the stamp of mind intelligibly printed on the face. It is not so much the symmetry of features, as the joint triumph of intellect and sweet temper. A fine old poet has well described her:

> Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks and so distinctly wrought,
> That one could almost say her body thought.

Her conversation, like her countenance, is compounded of liveliness, sensibility, and delicacy. She does not say things to be quoted, but the effect of her conversation is that it leaves an impression of pleasure on the mind, and a love of goodness on the heart. She enlivens without dazzling, and entertains without overpowering. Contented to please, she has no ambition to shine.

There is nothing like effort in her expression, or vanity in her manner. She has rather a playful gaiety than a pointed wit. Of repartee she has little, and dislikes it in others; yet I have seldom met with a truer taste for inoffensive wit. Taste is indeed the predominating quality of her mind; and she may rather be said to be a nice judge of the genius of others, than to be a genius herself. She has a quick perception of whatever is beautiful or defective, in composition or in character. The same true taste pervades her writing, her conversation, her dress, her domestic arrangements, and her gardening, for which last she has both a passion and a talent. Though she has a correct ear, she neither sings nor plays; and her taste is so exact in drawing, that she really seems to have *le compas dans l'œil*; yet I never saw a pencil in her fingers, except to sketch a seat or a bower for the pleasure ground. Her notions are too just to allow her to be satisfied with mediocrity in any thing, and for perfection in many things, she thinks that life is too short, and its duties too various and important. Having five younger sisters to assist, has induced her to neglect some acquisitions which she would have liked. Having been an only daughter, she owns that she would have indulged a little more in the garnish and decoration of life.

At her early age, the soundness of her judgment on persons and things cannot be derived from experience; she owes it to a *tact* so fine as enables her to seize on the strong feature, the prominent circumstance, the leading point, instead of confusing her mind and dissipating her attention on the

inferior parts of a character, a book, or a business. This justness of thinking teaches her to rate things according to their worth, and to arrange them according to their place. Her manner of speaking adds to the effect of her words, and the tone of her voice expresses with singular felicity, gaiety or kindness, as her feelings direct, and the occasion demands. This manner is so natural, and her sentiments spring so spontaneously from the occasion, that it is obvious that display is never in her head, nor an eagerness for praise in her heart. I never heard her utter a word which I could have wished unsaid, or a sentiment I would have wished unthought.

As to her dress, it reminds me of what Dr. Johnson once said to an acquaintance of mine, of a lady who was celebrated for dressing well. "The best evidence I can give you of her perfection in this respect is, that one can never remember what she had on." The dress of Lucilla is not neglected, and it is not studied. She is as neat as the strictest delicacy *demands*, and as fashionable as the strictest delicacy *permits*; and her nymphlike form does not appear to less advantage for being [redacted] scrupulous modesty.

Oh! if women in general knew what was their real interest! if they could guess with what a charm even the *appearance* of modesty invests its possessor, they would dress decorously from mere self-love, if not from principle. The designing would assume modesty as an artifice, the coquet would adopt it as an allurement, the pure as her appropriate attraction, and the voluptuous as the most infallible art of seduction.

What I admire in Miss Stanley, and what I have sometimes regretted the want of in some other women, is, that I am told she is so lively, so playful, so desirous of amusing her father and mother when alone, that they are seldom so gay as in their family party. It is then that her talents are all unfolded, and that her liveliness is without restraint. She was rather silent the two or three first days after my arrival, yet it was evidently not the silence of reserve or inattention, but of delicate propriety. Her gentle frankness and undesigning temper gradually got the better of this little shyness, and she soon began to treat me as the son of her father's friend. I very early found, that though a stranger might behold her without admiration, it was impossible to converse with her with indifference. Before I had been a week at the Grove, my precautions vanished, my panoply was gone, and yet I had not consulted Mr. Stanley.

In contemplating the captivating figure, and the delicate mind of this charming girl, I felt that imagination, which misleads so many youthful hearts, had preserved mine. The image my fancy had framed, and which had been sugges[redacted] by [redacted]lton's heroine, had been refined indeed, but it had not been romantic. I had early formed an ideal standard in my mind; too high, perhaps; but its very elevation had rescued me from the common dangers attending the society of the sex. I was continually comparing the women with whom I conversed, with the fair conception which filled my mind. The comparison might be unfair to them; I am sure it was not unfavourable to myself, for it preserved me from the fascination of

mere personal beauty, the allurements of factitious character, and the attractions of ordinary merit.

I am aware that love is apt to throw a radiance around the being it prefers, till it becomes dazzled, less perhaps with the brightness of the object itself, than with the beams with which imagination has invested it. But religion, though it had not subdued my imagination, had chastised it. It had sobered the splendors of fancy, without obscuring them. It had not extinguished the passions, but it had taught me to regulate them.—— I now seemed to have found the being of whom I had been in search. My mind felt her excellencies, my heart acknowledged its conqueror. I struggled, however, not to abandon myself to its impulses. I endeavoured to keep my own feelings in order, till I had time to appreciate a character, which appeared as artless as it was correct. And I did not allow myself to make this slight sketch of Lucilla, and of the effect she produced on my heart, till more intimate acquaintance had justified my prepossession.

[redacted] I [redacted]ne not forget that Mr. Stanley had another daughter. If Lucilla's character is more elevated, Phœbe's is not less amiable. Her face is equally handsome, but her figure is somewhat less delicate. She has a fine temper, and strong virtues. The little faults she has, seem to flow from the excess of her good qualities. Her susceptibility is extreme, and to guide and guard it, finds employment for her mother's fondness, and her father's prudence. Her heart overflows with gratitude for the smallest service. This warmth

of her tenderness keeps her affections in more lively exercise than her judgment; it leads her to over-rate the merit of those she loves, and to estimate their excellencies, less by their own worth than by their kindness to her. She soon behaved to me with the most engaging frankness, and her innocent vivacity encouraged, in return, that affectionate freedom with which one treats a beloved sister.

The other children are gay, lovely, interesting, and sweet-tempered. Their several acquisitions, for I detest the term *accomplishments*, since it has been warped from the true meaning in which Milton used it, seem to be so many individual contributions brought in to enrich the common stock of domestic delight. Their talents are never put into exercise by artificial excitements. Habitual industry, quiet exertion, successive employments, affectionate intercourse, and gay and animated relaxation, make up the round of their cheerful day.

I could not forbear admiring in this happy family the graceful union of piety with cheerfulness; strictness of principle embellished but never relaxed by gaiety of manners; a gaiety, not such as requires turbulent pleasures to stimulate it, but evidently the serene, yet animated, result of well regulated minds;—of minds actuated by a tenderness of conscience, habitually alive to the perception of the smallest sin, and kindling into holy gratitude at the smallest mercy.

I often called to mind that my father, in order to prevent my being deceived, and run away with by persons who appeared lively at first sight, had

early accustomed me to discriminate carefully, whether it was not the *animal* only that was lively, and the man dull. I have found this caution of no small use in my observations on the other sex. I had frequently remarked, that the musical and the dancing ladies, and those who were most admired for modish attainments, had little *intellectual* gaiety. In numerous instances I found that the mind was the only part which was not kept in action; and no wonder, for it was the only part which had received no previous forming, no preparatory moulding.

When I mentioned this to Mr. Stanley, "the education," replied he, "which now prevails, is a Mahometan education. It consists entirely in making woman an object of attraction. There are, however, a few reasonable people left, who, while they retain the object, improve upon the plan. They too would make woman attractive; but it is by sedulously labouring to make the understanding, the temper, the mind, and the manners of their daughters, as engaging as these Circassian parents endeavour to make the person."

CHAP. XV.

THE friendly rector frequently visited at Stanley Grove, and, for my father's sake honoured me with his particular kindness. Dr. Barlow filled up all my ideas of a country clergyman of the higher class. There is an uniform consistency runs through his whole life and character, which often brings to my mind, allowing for the revolution in habits that almost two hundred years have necessarily produced, the incomparable *country parson* of the ingenious Mr. George Herbert.*

"I never saw *Zeal without Innovation*," said Mr. Stanley, "more exemplified than in Dr. Barlow. His piety is as enlightened as it is sincere. No errors in religion escape him, through ignorance of their existence, or through carelessness

* See Herbert's Country Parson, under the heads of the parson in his house, the parson praying, the parson preaching, the parson comforting, the parson's church, the parson catechising, the parson in mirth, &c. &c. The term Parson has now indeed a vulgar and disrespectful sound, but in Herbert's time it was used in its true sense *persona ecclesiæ*. I would recommend to those who have not seen it, this sketch of the ancient clerical life. As Mr. Herbert was a man of quality, he knew what became the more opulent of his function; as he was eminently pious, he practised all that he recommended.—"This appellation of parson," says Judge Blackstone, "however depreciated by clownish and familiar use, is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honourable title, which a parish priest can enjoy." *Vide Blackstone's Commentaries.*

in their detection, or through inactivity in opposing them. He is too honest not to attack the prevailing evil, whatever shape it may assume; too correct to excite in the wise any fears that his zeal may mislead his judgment, and too upright to be afraid of the censures which active piety must ever have to encounter from the worldly and the indifferent, from cold hearts and unfurnished heads.

"From his affectionate warmth, however, and his unremitting application, arising from the vast importance he attaches to the worth of souls, the man of the world might honour him with the title of enthusiast; while his prudence, sobermindedness, and regularity, would draw on him from the fanatic, the appellation of formalist. Though he is far from being 'content to *dwell* in decencies,' he is careful never to neglect them. He is a clergyman all the week as well as on Sunday; for he says, if he did not spend much of the intermediate time in pastoral visits, there could not be kept up that mutual intercourse of kindness which so much facilitates his own labours, and his people's improvement. They listen to him because they love him, and they understand him, because he has familiarized them by private discourse to the great truths which he delivers from the pulpit.

"Dr. Barlow has greatly diminished the growth of innovation in his parishes, by attacking the innovator with his own weapons. Not indeed by stooping to the same disorderly practices, but by opposing an enlightened earnestness to an eccentric earnestness; a zeal *with* knowledge to a zeal *without* it. He is of opinion that activity does more good than invective, and that the latter is too

often resorted to, because it is the cheaper substitute.

"His charity, however, is large, and his spirit truly catholic. He honours all his truly pious brethren, who are earnest in doing good, though they may differ from him as to the manner of doing it. Yet his candour never intrenches on his firmness; and while he will not dispute with others about shades of difference, he maintains his own opinions with the steadiness of one who embraced them on the fullest conviction.

"He is a 'scholar, and being a good and a ripe one,' it sets him above aiming at the paltry reputation to be acquired by those false embellishments of style, those difficult and uncommon words, and that laboured inversion of sentences, by which some injudicious clergymen make themselves unacceptable to the higher, and unintelligible to the lower, and of course, the larger part of their audience. He always bears in mind that the common people are not foolish, they are only ignorant. To meet the one he preaches good sense, so suit the other, plain language. But while he seldom shoots over the heads of the uninformed, he never offends the judicious. He considers the advice of Polonius to his son to be as applicable to preachers as to travellers—

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

In his pulpit he is no wrangling polemic, but a genuine bible Christian, deeply impressed himself with the momentous truths he so earnestly presses upon others. His mind is so imbued, so saturated, if I may hazard the expression, with scriptural knowledge, that from that rich store-house, he is

ever ready to bring forth *treasures, new and old*, and to apply them wisely, temperately, and seasonably.

"Though he carefully inculcates universal holiness in all his discourses, yet his practical instructions are constantly deduced from those fundamental principles of Christianity which are the root and life and spirit of all goodness. Next to a solid piety, and a deep acquaintance with the Bible, he considers it of prime importance to a clergyman to be thoroughly acquainted with human nature in general, and with the state of his own parish in particular. The knowledge of both will alone preserve him from preaching too personally so as to hurt, or too generally so as not to touch.

"He is careful not to hurry over the prayers in so cold, inattentive, and careless a manner, as to make the audience suspect he is saving himself, that he may make a greater figure in delivering the sermon. Instead of this, the devout, reverential, and impressive manner in which he pronounces the various parts of the Liturgy, best prepares his own heart, and the hearts of his people, to receive benefit from his discourse. His petitions are delivered with such sober fervour, his exhortations with such humble dignity, his thanksgivings with such holy animation, as carry the soul of the hearer along with him. When he ascends the pulpit, he never throws the liturgical service into the back ground by a long elaborate composition of his own, delivered with superior force and emphasis. And he pronounces the Lord's prayer with a solemnity which shews that he recollects its importance and its author.

"In preaching, he is careful to be distinctly heard, even by his remotest auditors, and by constant attention to this important article. he has brought his voice, which was not strong, to be particularly audible. He affixes so much importance to a distinct delivery, that he smilingly told me, he suspected the grammatical definition of a substantive was originally meant for a clergyman, whose great object it was, if possible, *to be seen*, but indispensibly to be *heard felt and understood*.

"His whole performance is distinguished by a grave and majestic simplicity, as far removed from the careless reader of a common story, as from the declamations of an actor. His hearers leave the church, not so much in raptures with the preacher, as affected with the truths he has delivered. He says, he always finds he has done most good when he has been least praised, and that he feels most humbled when he receives the warmest commendation, because men generally extol most the sermons which have probed them least; whereas those which really do good, being often such as make them most uneasy, are consequently the least likely to attract panegyric. '*They* only bear true testimony to the excellence of a discourse,' added he, 'not who commend the composition or the delivery, but who are led by it to examine their own hearts, to search out its corruptions, and to reform their lives. Reformation is the flattery I covet.'

"He is aware that the generality of hearers like to retire from a sermon with the comfortable belief, that little is to be done on *their* parts. Such hearers he always disappoints, by leaving on their

minds at the close, some impressive precept deduced from, and growing out of, the preparatory doctrine. He does not press any one truth to the exclusion of all others. He proposes no subtilties, but labours to excite seriousness, to alarm the careless, to quicken the supine, to confirm the doubting. He presses eternal things as things near at hand; as things in which every living man has an equal interest."

Mr. Stanley says, that "though Dr. Barlow was considered at Cambridge as a correct young man, who carefully avoided vice and even irregularity, yet being cheerful, and addicted to good society, he had a disposition to innocent conviviality, which might, unsuspectedly, have led him into the errors he abhorred. He was struck with a passage in a letter from Dr. Johnson to a young man who had just taken orders, in which, among other wholesome counsel, he advises him 'to acquire the courage to refuse *sometimes* invitations to dinner.' It is inconceivable what a degree of force and independence his mind acquired by the occasional adoption of this single hint. He is not only," continued Mr. Stanley, "the spiritual director, but the father, the counsellor, the arbitrator, and the friend of those whom Providence has placed under his instruction.

"He is happy in an excellent wife, who, by bringing him a considerable fortune, has greatly enlarged his power of doing good. But still more essentially has she increased his happiness, and raised his character, by her piety and prudence. By the large part she takes in his affairs, he is enabled to give himself wholly up to the duties of his profes-

sion. She is as attentive to the bodies, as her husband is to the souls of his people, and educates her own family as sedulously as he instructs his parish.

"One day when I had been congratulating Dr. Barlow on the excellence of his wife's character, the conversation fell, by a sudden transition, on the celibacy of the Romish clergy. He smiled and said, 'Let us ministers of the Reformation be careful never to provoke the people to wish for the restoration of that part of popery. I often reflect how peculiarly incumbent it is on us, to select such partners as shall never cause our emancipation from the old restrictions to be regretted. And we ourselves ought, by improving the character of our wives, to repay the debt we owe to the ecclesiastical laws of protestantism for the privilege of possessing them.'

"Will it be thought too trifling to add, how carefully this valuable pair carry their consistency into the most minute details of their family arrangements? Their daughters are no less patterns of decorum and modesty in their dress and appearance, than in the more important parts of their conduct. The Doctor says, 'that the most distant and inconsiderable appendages to the temple of God, should have something of purity and decency. Besides,' added he, 'with what face could I censure improprieties from the pulpit, if the appearance of my own family in the pew below were to set my precepts at defiance, by giving an example of extravagance and vanity to the parish, and thus by making the preacher ridiculous, make his expostulations worse than ineffectual.'

"So conscientious a rector," added Mr. Stanley,

"could not fail to be particularly careful in the choice of a curate; and a more humble, pious, diligent assistant than Mr. Jackson could not easily be found. He is always a welcome guest at my table. But this valuable man, who was about as good a judge of the world as the great Hooker made just such another indiscreet marriage. He was drawn in to chuse his wife, the daughter of a poor tradesman in the next town, because he concluded that a woman bred in humble and active life, would necessarily be humble and active herself. *Her* reason for accepting *him* was because she thought that as every clergyman was a *gentleman*, she of course, as his wife, should be a *gentlewoman*, and fit company for any body.

"'He instructs my parish admirably,' said Dr. Barlow, 'but his own little family he cannot manage. His wife is continually reproaching him, that though he may know the way to heaven, he does not know how to push his way in the world. His daughter is the finest lady in the parish, and outdoes them all, not only in the extremity, but the immodesty of the fashion. It is her mother's great ambition that she should excel the Miss Stanleys and my daughters in music, while her good father's linen betrays sad marks of negligence. I once ventured to tell Mrs. Jackson, that there was only one reason which could excuse the education she had given her daughter, which was that I presumed she intended to qualify her for getting her bread; and that if she would correct the improprieties of the girl's dress, and get her instructed in useful knowledge, I would look out for a good situation for her. This roused her in-

dignation. She refused my offer with scorn, saying, that when she asked my charity, she would take my advice; and desired I would remember that one clergyman's daughter was as good as another. I told her that there was indeed a sense in which one clergyman was as good as another, because the profession dignified the lowest of the order, if, like her husband, he was a credit to that order. Yet still there were gradations in the church as well as in the state. But between the *wives* and *daughters* of the higher and lower clergy, there was the same distinction which riches and poverty have established between those of the higher and lower orders of the laity; and that rank and independence in the one case, confer the same outward superiority with rank and independence in the other."

CHAP. XVI.

AMONG the visitors at Stanley Grove, there was a family of ladies, who, though not particularly brilliant, were singularly engaging from their modesty, gentleness, and good sense. One day when they had just left us, Mr. Stanley obliged me with the following little relation: Mrs. Stanley and Lucilla only being present.

"Lady Aston has been a widow almost seven years. On the death of Sir George, she retired into this neighbourhood with her daughters, the eldest of whom is about the age of Lucilla. She herself had had a pious but a very narrow education. Her excessive grief for the loss of her husband augmented her natural love of retirement, which she cultivated, not to the purpose of improvement, but to the indulgence of melancholy. Soon after she settled here, we heard how much good she did, and in how exemplary a manner she lived, before we saw her. She was not very easy of access even to us; and after we had made our way to her, we were the only visitors she admitted for a long time. We soon learnt to admire her deadness to the world, and her unaffected humility. Our esteem for her encreased with our closer intercourse, which however enabled us also to observe some considerable mistakes in her judgment, especially in the mode in which she was training up her daughters. These errors we regretted, and with all possible tenderness ventured to point out to her. The girls were the prettiest

ıure little nuns you ever saw, mute and timid, erless and inactive, but kind, good, and gentle. Their pious mother, who was naturally of a ful and doubting mind, had had this pensive increased by several early domestic losses, ch, even previous to Sir George's death, had ributed to fix something of a too tender and eless melancholy on her whole character. re are two refuges for the afflicted; two dia- rically opposite ways of getting out of sorrow— gion and the world. Lady Aston had wisely ıen the former. But her scrupulous spirit had e the narrow way narrower than religion re- ed. She read the scriptures diligently, and prayed over them devoutly; but she had no cious friend to direct in these important stu- . As your Mrs. Ranby attended only to the rines, and our friend Lady Belfield trusted in- ıitely to the promises, so poor Lady Aston's ıen spirit was too exclusively carried to dwell he threatenings; together with the rigid per- ıance of those duties which she earnestly ho- might enable her to escape them. This round ıty, of watchfulness, and prayer, she invariably ormed with almost the sanctity of an apostle, with a little too much of the scrupulocity of an tic. While too many are rejoicing with un- ded confidence in those animating passages of ıture, which the whole tenor of their lives de- strates not to belong to them, she trembled at e denunciations which she could not fairly ap- o herself. And the promises from which she ıt have derived reasonable consolation, she looked as designed for others.

"Her piety, though sincere, was a little tinctured with superstition. If any petty strictness was omitted, she tormented herself with causeless remorse. If any little rule was broken, she repaired the failure with treble diligence the following day; and laboured to retrieve her perplexed accounts with the comfortless anxiety of a person who is working out a heavy debt. I endeavoured to convince her, that an inferior duty which clashed with one of a higher order, might be safely postponed at least, if not omitted.

"A diary has been found useful to many pious Christians, as a record of their sins, and of their mercies. But this poor lady spent so much time in weighing the offences of one day against those of another, that before the scruple was settled, the time for action was past. She brought herself into so much perplexity by reading over this journal of her infirmities, that her difficulties were augmented by the very means she had employed to remove them; and her conscience was disturbed by the method she had taken to quiet it. This plan, however, though distressing to a troubled mind, is wholesome to one of a contrary cast.

"*My* family, as you have seen, are rather exact in the distribution of their time, but we do not distress ourselves at interruptions which are unavoidable: but *her* arrangements were carried on with a rigour which made her consider the smallest deviation as a sin that required severe punishment. Her alms were expiations, her self-denials penances. She was rather a disciple of the mortified Baptist, than of the merciful Redeemer. Her devotions were sincere but discouraging. They con-

sisted much in contrition, but little in praise; much in sorrow for sin, but little in hope of its pardon. She did not sufficiently cast her care and confidence on the great propitiation. She firmly believed all that her Saviour had done and suffered, but she had not the comfort of practically appropriating the sacrifice. While she was painfully working out her salvation with fear and trembling, she indulged the most unfounded apprehensions of the divine displeasure. At Aston Hall the Almighty was literally feared, but he was not glorified. It was the obedience of a slave, not the reverential affection of a child.

"When I saw her denying herself and her daughters the most innocent enjoyments, and suspecting sin in the most lawful indulgences, I took the liberty to tell her how little acceptable uncommanded austerities and arbitrary impositions were to the God of mercies. I observed to her that the world, that human life, that our own sins and weaknesses, found us daily and hourly occasions of exercising patience and self-denial; that life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials, but that the perpetual recurrence of petty evils and small trials is the ordinary and appointed exercise of the christian graces. To bear with the failings of those about us, with their infirmities, their bad judgment, their ill-breeding, their perverse tempers; to endure neglect where we feel we have deserved attention, and ingratitude where we expected thanks; to bear with the company of disagreeable people, whom Providence has placed in our way, and whom he has perhaps provided on purpose for the trial of our virtue: these

are the best exercises; and the better because not chosen by ourselves. To bear with vexations in business, with disappointment in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, intrusion, disturbance, in short, with whatever opposes our will, and contradicts our humour;—this habitual acquiescence appears to be more of the essence of self-denial than any little rigours or inflictions of our own imposing. These constant, inevitable, but inferior evils, properly improved, furnish a good moral discipline, and might well in the days of ignorance have superseded pilgrimage and penance. It has this advantage too over the other, that it sweetens the temper and promotes humility, while the former gives rigidness instead of strength, and inflexibility instead of firmness."

"I have often thought," said I, when Mr. Stanley made a pause, "that we are apt to mistake our vocation by looking out of the way for occasions to exercise great and rare virtues, and by stepping over those ordinary ones which lie directly in the road before us. When we read, we fancy we could be martyrs, and when we come to act, we cannot even bear a provoking word."

Miss Stanley looked pleased at my remark, and in a modest tone observed that "in no one instance did we deceive ourselves more than in fancying we could do great things well, which we were never likely to be called to do at all; while, if we were honest, we could not avoid owning how negligently we performed our own little appointed duties, and how sedulously we avoided the petty inconveniences which these duties involved."

"By kindness," resumed Mr. Stanley, "we gra-

dually gained Lady Aston's confidence, and of that confidence we have availed ourselves to give something of a new face to the family. Her daughters, good as they were dutiful, by living in a solitude unenlivened by books, and unvaried by improving company, had acquired a manner rather resembling fearfulness than delicacy. Religious they were, but they had contracted gloomy views of religion. They considered it as something that must be endured in order to avoid punishment, rather than as a principle of peace, and trust, and comfort: as a task to be gone through, rather than as a privilege to be enjoyed. They were tempted to consider the Almighty as a hard master, whom however they were resolved to serve, rather than as a gracious father who was not only loving, but LOVE in the abstract. Their mother was afraid to encourage a cheerful look, lest it might lead to levity; or a sprightly thought, for fear it might have a wrong tendency. She forgot, or rather she did not know, that young women were not formed for contemplative life. She forgot that in all our plans and operations we should still bear in mind that there are two worlds. As it is the fault of too many to leave the *next* out of their calculation, it was the error of Lady Aston, in forming the minds of her children, to leave out *this*. She justly considered heaven as their great aim and end; but neglected to qualify them for the present temporal life, on the due use and employment of which so obviously depends the happiness of that which is eternal.

"Her charities were very extensive, but of these charities her sweet daughters were not made the

active dispensers, because an old servant, who governed not only the family, but her lady also, chose that office herself. Thus the bounty being made to flow in partial channels, the woman's relations and favourites almost entirely engrossing it, it did little comparative good.

"With fair understandings the Miss Astons had acquired very little knowledge: their mother's scrupulous mind found something dangerous in every author, who did not professedly write on religious subjects. If there were one exceptionable page in a book, otherwise valuable, instead of suppressing the page, she suppressed the book. And indeed, my dear Charles, grieved am I to think how few authors of the more entertaining kind we *can* consider as perfectly pure, and put without caution, restriction, or mutilation, into the hands of our daughters. I am, however, of opinion, that as they will not always have their parents for tasters, and as they will every where, even in the most select libraries, meet with these mixed works, in which, though there is much to admire, yet there is something to expunge, it is the safest way to accustom them early to hear read the most unexceptionable parts of these books. Read them yourself to them without any air of mystery; tell them that what you omit is not worth reading, and then the omissions will not excite but stifle curiosity. The books to which I allude are those where the principle is sound and the tendency blameless, and where the few faults consist rather in coarseness than in corruption.

"But to return; she fancied that these inexperienced creatures, who had never tried the world,

and whose young imaginations had perhaps painted it in all the brilliant colours with which erring fancy gilds the scenes it has never beheld, and the pleasure it has never tried, could renounce it as completely as herself, who had exhausted what it has to give, and was weary of it. She thought they could live contentedly in their closets, without considering that she had neglected to furnish their minds with that knowledge which may make the closet a place of enjoyment, by supplying the intervals of devotional with entertaining reading.

"We carried Lucilla and Phœbe to visit them: I believe she was a little afraid of their gay countenances. I talked to her of the necessity of literature to inform her daughters, and of pleasures to enliven them. The term pleasure alarmed her still more than that of literature. 'What pleasures were allowed to religious people? She would make her daughters as happy as she dared without offending her Maker.' I quoted the devout but liberal Hooker, who exhorts us not to regard the Almighty as a captious sophist, but as a merciful Father.

"During this conversation we were sitting under the fine spreading oak on my lawn, in front of that rich bank of flowers which you so much admire. It was a lovely evening in the end of June, the setting sun was all mild radiance, the sky all azure, the air all fragrance. The birds were in full song. The children, sitting on the grass before us, were weaving chaplets of wild flowers.

It looked like nature in the world's first spring.

"My heart was touched with joy, and gratitude.

'Look, madam,' said I, 'at the bountiful provision which a beneficent father makes, not only for the necessities, but for the pleasures of his children;

——— not content
With every food of life to nourish man,
He makes all nature beauty to his eye,
And music to his ear.

"'These flowers are of so little apparent use, that it might be thought profuseness in any economy short of that which is divine, to gratify us at once with such forms, and such hues, and such fragrance. It is a gratification not necessary, yet exquisite, which lies somewhere between the pleasures of sense and intellect, and in a measure partakes of both. It elevates while it exhilirates, and lifts the soul from the gift to the giver. God has not left his goodness to be *inferred* from abstract speculation, from the conclusions of reason, from deduction and argument; we not only collect it from observation, but we have palpable evidences of his bounty, we feel it with our senses. Were God a hard master, might he not withhold these superfluities of goodness? Do you think he makes such rich provision for us, that we should shut our eyes and close our ears to them? Does he present such gifts with one hand, and hold in the other a stern interdict of 'touch not, taste not, handle not?' And can you believe he is less munificent in the economy of grace, than in that of nature? Do you imagine that he provides such abundant supplies for our appetites and senses here, without providing more substantial pleasures for our future enjoyment? Is not what we see a prelude to what we hope for, a pledge of what we may expect? A

specimen of larger, higher, richer bounty, an encouraging cluster from the land of promise? If from his works we turn to his word, we shall find the same inexhaustible goodness exercised to still nobler purposes. Must we not hope then, even by analogy, that he has in store blessings exalted in their nature, and eternal in their duration, for all those who love and serve him in the gospel of his son?'

"We now got on fast. She was delighted with my wife, and grew less and less afraid of my girls. I believe, however, that we should have made a quicker progress in gaining her confidence if we had looked less happy. I suggested to her to endeavour to raise the tone of her daughter's piety, to make their habits less monastic, their tempers more cheerful, their virtues more active; to render their lives more useful, by making them the immediate instruments of her charity; to take them out of themselves, and teach them to compare their factitious distresses with real substantial misery, and to make them feel grateful for the power and the privilege of relieving it.

"As Dr. Barlow has two parishes which join, and we had pre-occupied the ground in our own, I advised them to found a school in the next, for the instruction of the young, and a friendly society for the aged of their own sex. We prevailed on them to be themselves not the nominal but the active patronesses; to take the measure of all the wants and all the merit of their immediate neighbourhood; to do every thing under the advice and superintendance of Dr. Barlow, and to make him their 'guide, philosopher, and friend.' By adopting this plan, they now see the poverty of which

they only used to hear, and know personally the dependants whom they protect.

"Dr. Barlow took infinite pains to correct Lady Aston's views of religion. 'Let your notions of God,' said he, 'be founded, not on your own gloomy apprehensions, and visionary imagination, but on what is revealed in his word, else the very intenseness of your feeling, the very sincerity of your devotion, may betray you into enthusiasm, into error, into superstition, into despair. Spiritual notions which are not grounded on scriptural truth, and directed and guarded by a close adherence to it, mislead tender hearts and warm imaginations. But while you rest on the sure unperverted foundation of the word of God, and pray for his spirit to assist you in the use of his word, you will have little cause to dread that you shall fear him too much, or serve him too well. I earnestly exhort you,' continued he, 'not to take the measure of your spiritual state from circumstances which have nothing to do with it. Be not dismayed at an incidental depression which may depend on the state of your health, or your spirits, or your affairs. Look not for sensible communications. Do not consider rapturous feelings as any criterion of the favour of your Maker, nor the absence of them as any indication of his displeasure. An encreasing desire to know him more, and serve him better; an encreasing desire to do, and to suffer his whole will; a growing resignation to his providential dispensations is a much surer, a much more unequivocal test.'

"I next," continued Mr. Stanley, "carried our worthy curate Mr. Jackson to visit her, and pro-

posed that she should engage him to spend a few hours every week with the young ladies. I recommended that after he had read with them a portion of scripture, of which he would give them a sound and plain exposition, he should convince them he had not the worse taste for being religious, by reading with them some books of general instruction, history, travels, and polite literature. This would imbue their minds with useful knowledge, form their taste, and fill up profitably and pleasantly that time which now lay heavy on their hands; and, without entrenching on any of their duties, would qualify them to discharge them more cheerfully.

"I next suggested that they should study gardening; and that they should put themselves under the tuition of Lucilla, who is become the little Repton of the valley. To add to the interest, I requested that a fresh piece of ground might be given them, that they might not only exercise their taste, but be animated with seeing the compleat effect of their own exertions; as a creation of their own would be likely to afford them more amusement, than improving on the labours of another.

"I had soon the gratification of seeing my little Carmelites, who used when they walked in the garden, to look as if they came to dig a daily portion of their own graves, now enjoying it, embellishing it, and delighted by watching its progress; and their excellent mother, who, like Spenser's Despair, used to look 'as if she never dined,' now enjoying the company of her select friends. The mother has become almost cheerful, and the daughters almost gay. Their dormant faculties are a-

wakened. Time is no longer a burden but a blessing; the day is too short for their duties, which are performed with alacrity since they have been converted into pleasures. You will believe I did not hazard all these terrible innovations as rapidly as I recount them, but gradually, as they were able to bear it.

"This happy change in themselves has had the happiest consequences. Their friends had conceived the strongest prejudices against religion, from the gloomy garb in which they had seen it arrayed at Aston Hall. The uncle who was also the guardian, had threatened to remove the girls before they were quite moped to death; the young baronet was actually forbidden to come home at the holidays; but now the uncle is quite reconciled to *them*, and almost to *religion*. He has resumed his fondnes for the daughters; and their brother, a fine youth at Cambridge, is happy in spending his vacations with his family, to whom he is become tenderly attached. He has had his own principles and character much raised by the conversation and example of Dr. Barlow, who contrives to be at Aston Hall as much as possible when Sir George is there. He is daily expected to make his mother a visit, when I shall recommend him to your particular notice and acquaintance."

Lucilla blushing, said, she thought her father had too exclusively recommended the *brother* to my friendship; she would venture to say the *sisters* were equally worthy of my regard, adding in an affectionate tone, 'they are every thing that is amiable and kind. The more you know them, sir, the more you will admire them; for their good

qualities are kept back, by the best quality of all, their modesty.' This candid and liberal praise did not sink the fair elogist herself in my esteem.

CHAP. XVII.

I HAD now been near three weeks at the Grove. Ever since my arrival I had contracted the habit of pouring out my heart to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, with grateful affection and filial confidence. I still continued to do it on all subjects except one.

The more I saw of Lucilla, the more difficult I found it to resist her numberless attractions. I could not persuade myself that either prudence or duty demanded that I should guard my heart against such a combination of amiable virtues and gentle graces: virtues and graces, which, as I observed, before, my mind had long been combining as a delightful idea, and which I now saw realized in a form more engaging, than even my own imagination had allowed itself to picture.

I did not feel courage sufficient to risk the happiness I actually enjoyed, by aspiring too suddenly to a happiness more perfect. I dared not yet avow to the parents, or the daughter, feelings which, my fears told me, might possibly be discouraged, and which, if discouraged, would at once dash to the ground a fabric of felicity that my heart, not

my fancy had erected, and which my taste, my judgment, and my principles equally approved, and delighted to contemplate.

The great critic of antiquity, in his Treatise on the drama, observes that the introduction of a new person is of the next importance to a new incident. Whether the introduction of two interlocutors is equal in importance to two incidents, Aristotle has forgotten to establish. This dramatic rule was illustrated by the arrival of Sir John and Lady Belfield, who, though not new to the reader or the writer, were new at Stanley Grove.

The early friendship of the two gentlemen had suffered little diminution from absence, though their intercourse had been much interrupted. Sir John who was a few years younger than his friend, since his marriage, having lived as entirely in the town, as Mr. Stanley had done in the country. Mrs. Stanley had indeed seen Lady Belfield a few times in Cavendish Square, but her ladyship had never before been introduced to the other inhabitants of the Grove.

The guests were received with cordial affection, and easily fell into the family habits, which they did not wish to interrupt, but from the observation of which they hoped to improve their own. They were charmed with the interesting variety of characters in the lovely young family, who in return were delighted with the politeness, kindness, and cheerfulness of their father's guests.

Shall I avow my own meanness? Cordially as I loved the Belfields, I am afraid I saw them arrive with a slight tincture of jealousy. They would, I thought, by enlarging the family circle, throw me

at a farther distance from the being, whom I wished to contemplate nearly. They would, by dividing her attention, diminish my proportion. I had been hitherto the sole guest, I was now to be one of several. This was the first discovery I made, that love is a narrower of the heart. I tried to subdue the ungenerous feeling, and to meet my valuable friends with a warmth adequate to that which they so kindly manifested. I found that a wrong feeling at which one has virtue enough left to blush, is seldom lasting, and shame soon expelled it.

The first day was passed in mutual enquiries and mutual communications. Lady Belfield told me that the amiable Fanny, after having wept over the grave of her mother, was removed to the house of the benevolent clergyman, who had kindly promised her an asylum, till Lady Belfield's return to town, when it was intended she should be received into her family; that worthy man and his wife, having taken on themselves a full responsibility for her character and disposition; and generously promised that they would exert themselves to advance her progress in knowledge during the interval. Lady Belfield added, that every enquiry respecting Fanny, whom we must now call Miss Stokes, had been attended with the most satisfactory result, her principles being as unquestionable as her talents.

After dinner, I observed that whenever the door opened, Lady Belfield's eye was turned towards it, in expectation of seeing the children. Her affectionate heart felt disappointed on finding that they did not appear, and she could not forbear whisper-

ing me, who sat next her, "that she was afraid the piety of our good friends was a little tinctured with severity. For her part she saw no reason why religion should diminish one's affection for one's children, and rob them of their innocent pleasures." I assured her gravely I thought so too; but forbore telling her how totally inapposite her application was to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. She seemed glad to find me of her opinion, and gave up all hope of seeing the "little melancholy recluses," as she called them, "unless," she said laughing, "she might be permitted to look at them through the grate of their cells." I smiled, but did not undeceive her, and affected to join in her compassion. When we went to attend the ladies in the drawing room, I was delighted to find Lady Belfield sitting on a low stool, the whole gay groupe at play round her. A blush mixed itself with her good natured smile, as we interchanged a significant look. She was questioning one of the elder ones, while the youngest sat on her lap singing. Sir John entered with that kindness and good humour so natural to him, into the sports of the others, who, though wild with health and spirits, were always gentle and docile. He had a thousand pleasant things to entertain them with. He too, it seems, had not been without his misgivings.

"Are not these poor miserable recluses?" whispered I maliciously to her ladyship, "and are not these rueful looks proof positive that religion diminishes our affection for our children? and is it not abridging their innocent pleasures, to give them their full range in a fresh airy apartment, instead of cramming them into an eating room, of

which the air is almost fœtid by the fumes of the dinner and a crouded table? and is it not better that they should spoil the pleasure of the company, though the mischief they do is bought by the sacrifice of their own liberty?" "I make my *amende*," said she. "I never will be so forward again to suspect piety of ill nature." "So far from it, Caroline," said Sir John, "that we will adopt the practice we were so forward to blame; and I shall not do it," said he, "more from regard to the company than to the children, who I am sure will be gainers in point of enjoyment; liberty I perceive is to them positive pleasure, and paramount to any which our false epicurism can contrive for them."

"Well, Charles," said Sir John, as soon as he saw me alone, "now tell us about this Lucilla, this paragon, this nonpariel of Dr. Barlow's. Tell me what is she? or rather what is she not?"

"First," replied I, "I will, as you desire, define her by negatives—she is *not* a professed beauty, she is *not* a professed genius, she is *not* a professed philosopher, she is *not* a professed wit, she is *not* a professed any thing; and, I thank my stars, she is *not* an artist!" "Bravo, Charles, now as to what she is!" "She is," replied I, "from nature—a woman, gentle, feeling, animated, modest.—She is, by education, elegant, informed, enlightened.—She is, from religion, pious, humble, candid, charitable."

"What a refreshment will it be," said Sir John, "to see a girl of fine sense, more cultivated than accomplished,—the creature, not of fidlers and dancing masters, but of nature, of books, and of

good company! If there is the same mixture of spirit and delicacy in her character, that there is of softness and animation in her countenance, she is a dangerous girl, Charles."

"She certainly does," said I, "possess the essential charm of beauty where it exists; and the most effectual substitute for it, where it does not; the power of prepossessing the beholder by her look and manner, in favour of her understanding and temper."

This prepossession, I afterwards found confirmed, not only by her own share in the conversation, but by its effect on myself; I always feel that our intercourse unfolds not only her powers but my own. In conversing with such a woman, I am apt to fancy that I have more understanding, because her animating presence brings it more into exercise.

After breakfast, next day, the conversation happened to turn on the indispensable importance of unbounded confidence to the happiness of married persons. Mr. Stanley expressed his regret, that though it was one of the grand ingredients of domestic comfort, yet it was sometimes unavoidably prevented by an unhappy inequality of mind between the parties, by violence, or imprudence, or imbecility on one side, which almost compelled the other to a degree of reserve, as incompatible with the design of the union, as with the frankness of the individual.

"We have had an instance among our own friends," replied Sir John, "of this evil being produced, not by any of the faults to which you have adverted, but by an excess of misapplied sensibili-

ty, in two persons of near equality as to merit, and in both of whom the utmost purity of mind, and exactness of conduct rendered all concealment superfluous. Our worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton married from motives of affection, and with an high opinion of each others merit, which their long and intimate connection has rather contributed to exalt than to lower; and yet, now at the end of seven years, they are only beginning to be happy. They contrived to make each other and themselves as uncomfortable by an excess of tenderness, as some married pairs are rendered by the want of it. A mistaken sensibility has intrenched not only on their comfort, but on their sincerity. Their resolution never to give each other pain, has led them to live in a constant state of petty concealment. They are neither of them remarkably healthy, and to hide from each other every little indisposition, has kept up a continual vigilance to conceal illness on the one part, and to detect it on the other, till it became a trial of skill which could make the other most unhappy; each suffering much more by suspicion when there was no occasion for it, than they could have done by the acknowledgement of slight complaints, when they actually existed.

"This valuable pair, after seven years apprenticeship to a petty martydom, have at last found out, that it is better to submit to the inevitable ills of life, cheerfully and in concert, and to comfort each other under them cordially, than alternately to suffer and inflict the pain of perpetual disingenuousness. They have at last discovered that uninterrupted prosperity is not the lot of man.

Each is happier now with knowing that the other is sometimes sick, than they used to be with suspecting they were always so. The physician is now no longer secretly sent for to one, when the other is known to be from home. The apothecary is at last allowed to walk boldly up the public staircase fearless of detection.

"These amiable persons have at length attained all that was wanting to their felicity, that of each believing the other to be well, when they *say* they are so. They have found out that unreserved communication is the lawful commerce of conjugal affection, and that all concealment is contraband."

"Surely," said I, when Sir John had done speaking, "it is a false compliment to the objects of our affection, if, for the sake of sparing them a transient uneasiness, we rob them of the comfort to which they are entitled, of mitigating our suffering by partaking it. All dissimulation is disloyalty to love. Besides, it appears to me, to be an introduction to wider evils, and I should fear both for the woman I loved, and for myself, that if once we allowed ourselves concealment in one point, where we thought the motive excused us, we might learn to adopt it in others, where the principle was more evidently wrong."

"Besides," replied Mr. Stanley, "it argues a lamentable ignorance of human life, to set out with an expectation of health without interruption, and of happiness without alloy. When young persons marry with the fairest prospects, they should never forget that infirmity is inseparably bound up with their very nature, and that in bearing one another's burdens, they fulfil one of the highest duties *of* the union."

CHAP. XVIII.

AFTER supper, when only the family party were present, the conversation turned on the unhappy effects of misguided passion. Mrs. Stanley lamented that novels, with a very few admirable exceptions, had done infinite mischief, by so completely establishing the omnipotence of love, that the young reader was almost systematically taught an unresisting submission to a feeling, because the feeling was commonly represented as irresistible.

"Young Ladies," said Sir John, smiling, "in their blind submission to this imaginary omnipotence, are apt to be necessarians. When they *fall* in love, as it is so justly called, they then obey their *fate*; but in their stout opposition to prudence and duty, they most manfully exert their *free-will*; so that they want nothing but the *knowledge absolute*, of the miseries attendant on an indiscreet attachment, compleatly to exemplify the occupation assigned by Milton to a class of beings to whom it would not be gallant to resemble young ladies."

Mrs. Stanley continued to assert, that ill-placed affection only became invincible, because its supposed invincibility had been first erected into a principle. She then adverted to the power of religion in subduing the passions, that of love among the rest.

I ventured to ask Lucilla, who was sitting next me, (a happiness which by some means or other I

generally contrived to enjoy,) what were her sentiments on this point? With a little confusion, she said, "to conquer an ill-placed attachment, I conceive may be effected by motives inferior to religion. Reason, the humbling conviction of having made an unworthy choice, for I will not resort to so bad a motive as pride, may easily accomplish it. But to conquer a well founded affection, a justifiable attachment, I should imagine, requires the powerful principle of Christian piety; and what cannot that effect?" She stopped and blushed, as fearing she had said too much.

Lady Belfield observed, that she believed a virtuous attachment might possibly be subdued by the principle Miss Stanley had mentioned; yet she doubted if it were in the power of religion itself, to enable the heart to conquer aversion, much less to establish affection for an object for whom dislike had been entertained.

"I believe," said Mr. Stanley, "the example is rare, and the exertion difficult; but that which is difficult to us, is not impossible to Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand. And I am happy to resolve Lady Belfield's doubt by a case in point.

"You cannot, Sir John, have forgotten our old London acquaintance, Carlton?" "No," replied he, "nor can I ever forget what I have since heard, of his ungenerous treatment of that most amiable woman, his wife. I suppose he has long ago broken her heart."

"You know," resumed Mr. Stanley, "they married not only without any inclination on either side, but on her part with something more than indifference, with a preference for another person. *She*

married through an implicit obedience to her mother's will, which she had never in any instance opposed; *He*, because his father had threatened to disinherit him if he married any other woman; for as they were distant relations, there was no other way of securing the estate in the family.

"What a motive for an union so sacred and so indissoluble!" exclaimed I, with an ardour which raised a smile in the whole party. I asked pardon for my involuntary interruption, and Mr. Stanley proceeded.

"She had long entertained a partiality for a most deserving young clergyman, much her inferior in rank and fortune. But though her high sense of filial duty led her to sacrifice this innocent inclination, and though she resolved never to see him again, and had even prevailed on him to quit the country, and settle in a distant place, yet Carlton was ungenerous and inconsistent enough to be jealous of her without loving her. He was guilty of great irregularities, while Mrs. Carlton set about acquitting herself of the duties of a wife, with the most meek and humble patience, burying her sorrows in her own bosom, and not allowing herself even the consolation of complaining.

"Among the many reasons for his dislike, her piety was the principal. He said religion was of no use but to disqualify people for the business of life; that it taught them to make a merit of despising their duties, and hating their relations; and that pride, ill-humour, opposition, and contempt for the rest of the world, were the meat and drink of all those who pretended to religion.

"At first she nearly sunk under his unkindness;

her health declined, and her spirits failed. In this distress she applied to the only sure refuge of the unhappy, and took comfort in the consideration that her trials were appointed by a merciful Father to detach her from a world which she might have loved too fondly, had it not been thus stripped of its delights.

" When Mrs. Stanley, who was her confidential friend, expressed the tenderest sympathy in her sufferings, she meekly replied, 'remember who are they whose robes are washed white in the kingdom of glory, *it is they who come out of great tribulation.* I endeavour to strengthen my faith with a view of what the best Christians have suffered, and my hope with meditating on the shortness of all suffering. I will confess my weakness,' added she: 'of the various motives to patience under the ills of life, which the Bible presents, though my reason and religion acknowledge them all, there is not one which comes home so powerfully to my feelings as this—*the time is short.*

" Another time Mrs. Stanley, who had heard of some recent irregularities of Carlton, called upon her, and lamenting the solitude to which she was often left for days together, advised her to have a female friend in the house, that her mind might not be left to prey upon itself by living so much alone. She thanked her for the kind suggestion, but said she felt it was wiser and better not to have a confidential friend always at hand, 'for of what subject should we talk,' said she, 'but of my husband's faults? Ought I to allow myself in such a practice? It would lead me to indulge a habit of complaint which I am labouring to subdue. The

compassion of my friend would only sharpen my feelings, which I wish to blunt. Giving vent to a flame only makes it rage the more; if suppressing cannot subdue it, at least the consciousness that I am doing my duty will enable me to support it.—When we feel,' added she, 'that we are *doing* wrong, the opening our heart may strengthen our virtue; but when we are *suffering* wrong, the mind demands another sort of strength; it wants higher support than friendship has to impart. It pours out its sorrows in prayer with fuller confidence, knowing that he who sees can sustain; that he who hears will recompence; that he will judge not our weakness but our efforts to conquer it; not our success but our endeavours; with him endeavour is victory.

"'The grace I most want,' added she, 'is humility. A partial friend, in order to support my spirits, would flatter my conduct: gratified with her soothing, I should, perhaps, not so entirely cast myself for comfort on God. Contented with human praise I might rest in it. Besides having endured the smart, I would not willingly endure it in vain. We know who has said, 'if you suffer with me, you shall also reign with me.' It is not, however, to mere suffering that the promise is addressed, but to suffering for his sake, and in his spirit.' Then turning to the Bible which lay before her, and pointing to the sublime passage of St. Paul, which she had just been reading 'our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' 'Pray,' said she, 'read this in connection with the next verse which is not always done. *When* is it

that it works for us this weight of glory? *Only*, 'while we are looking at the things which are not seen.' Do admire the beauty of this position, and how the good is weighed against the evil, like two scales differently filled; the affliction is light, and but for a moment; the glory is a *weight* and it is for *ever*. 'Tis a feather against lead, a grain of sand against the universe, a moment against eternity. Oh, how the scale which contains this world's light trouble kicks the beam, when weighed against the glory which shall be revealed.'

"At the end of two years she had a little girl: this opened to her a new scene of duties, and a fresh source of consolation. Her religion proved itself to be of the right stamp, by making her temper still more sweet, and diffusing the happiest effects through her whole character and conversation. When her husband had staid out late, or even all night, she never reproached him. When he was at home, she received his friends with as much civility as if she had liked them. He found that his house was conducted with the utmost prudence, and that while she maintained his credit at his table, her personal expences were almost nothing: indeed self seemed nearly annihilated inher. He sometimes felt disappointed, because he had no cause of complaint, and was angry that he had nothing to condemn.

"As he has a very fine understanding, he was the more provoked, because he could not help seeing that her blameless conduct put him continually in the wrong. All this puzzled him. He never suspected there was a principle, out of which such consequences could grow, and was

ready to attribute to insensibility, that patience which nothing short of Christian piety could have inspired. He had conceived of religion, as a visionary system of words and phrases, and concluded that from so unsubstantial a theory, it would be a a folly to look for practical effects.

"Sometimes, when he saw her nursing his child, of whom he was very fond, he was almost tempted to admire the mother, who is a most pleasing figure; and now and then when his heart was thus softened for a moment, he would ask himself, what reasonable ground of objection there was either to her mind or person?

"Mrs. Carlton, knowing that his affairs must necessarily be embarrassed, by the extraordinary expences he had incurred, when the steward brought her usual year's allowance, she refused to take more than half, and ordered him to employ the remainder on his master's account. The faithful old man was ready to weep, and could not forbear saying, 'Madam you could not do more for a kind husband. Besides, it is but a drop of water in the ocean.' 'That drop,' said she, 'it is my duty to contribute.' When the steward communicated this to Carlton, he was deeply affected, refused to take the money, and again was driven to resort to the wonderful principle, from which such right but difficult actions could proceed."

Here I interrupted Mr. Stanley. "I am quite of the steward's opinion," said I. "That a woman should do this and much more for the man who loved her, and whom she loved, is quite intelligible to every being who has a heart. But

for a cruel, unfeeling, tyrant! I do not comprehend it. What say you, Miss Stanley?"

"Under the circumstances you suppose," said she blushing, "I think the woman would have no shadow of merit; her conduct would be a mere gratification, an entire indulgence of her own feelings. The triumph of affection would have been cheap; Mrs. Carlton's was the triumph of religion; of a principle which could subdue an attachment to a worthy object, and act with such generosity towards an unworthy one."

Mr. Stanley went on. "Mrs. Carlton frequently sat up late, reading such books as might qualify her for the education of her child, but always retired before she had reason to expect Mr. Carlton, lest he might construe it into upbraiding. One night, as he was not expected to come home at all, she sat later than usual, and had indulged herself with taking her child to pass the night in her bed. With her usual earnestness she knelt down and offered up her devotions by her bed-side, and in a manner particularly solemn and affecting, prayed for her husband. Her heart was deeply touched, and she dwelt on these petitions in a strain peculiarly fervent. She prayed for his welfare in both worlds, and earnestly implored that she might be made the humble instrument of his happiness. She meekly acknowledged her own many offences; of his she said nothing.

"Thinking herself secure from interruption, her petitions were uttered aloud; her voice often faultering, and her eyes streaming with tears. Little did she suspect that the object of her prayers was within hearing of them. He had returned

home unexpectedly, and coming softly into the room, heard her pious aspirations. He was inexpressibly affected. He wept, and sighed bitterly. The light from the candles on the table fell on the blooming face of his sleeping infant, and on that of his weeping wife. It was too much for him. But he had not the virtuous courage to give way to his feelings. He had not the generosity to come forward and express the admiration he felt. He withdrew unperceived, and passed the remainder of the night in great perturbation of spirit. Shame, remorse, and confusion, raised such a conflict in his mind, as prevented him from closing his eyes; while she slept in quiet, and awoke in peace.

"The next morning, during a very short interview, he behaved to her with a kindness which she had never before experienced. He had not resolution to breakfast with her, but promised, with affection in his words and manner to return to dinner. The truth was, he never quitted home, but wandered about his woods to compose and strengthen his mind. This self-examination was the first he had practised; its effects were salutary.

"A day or two previous to this, they had dined at our house. He had always been much addicted to the pleasures of the table. He expressed high approbation of a particular dish, and mentioned again when he got home how much he liked it. The next morning Mrs. Carlton wrote to Lucilla to beg the receipt for making this ragout; and this day, when he returned from his solitary ramble and "compunctuous visitings," the favourite

dish, most exquisitely dressed, was produced at his dinner. He thanked her for this obliging attention, and turning to the butler, directed him to tell the cook that no dish was ever so well dressed. Mrs. Carlton blushed when the honest butler said, 'Sir, it was my mistress dressed it with her own hands, because she knew your honour was fond of it.

"Tears of gratitude rushed into Carlton's eyes, and tears of joy overflowed those of the old domestic, when his master, rising from the table, tenderly embraced his wife, and declared he was unworthy of such a treasure. 'I have been guilty of a public wrong, Johnson,' said he to his servant, 'and my reparation shall be as public. I can never deserve her, but my life shall be spent in endeavouring to do so.'

"The little girl was brought in, and her presence seemed to cement this new formed union. An augmented cheerfulness on the part of Mrs. Carlton invited an increased tenderness on that of her husband. He began every day to discover new excellencies in his wife, which he readily acknowledged to herself, and to the world. The conviction of her worth had gradually been producing esteem, esteem now ripened into affection, and his affection for his wife was mingled with a blind sort of admiration of that piety which had produced such effects. He now began to think home the pleasantest place, and his wife the pleasantest companion.

"A gentle censure from him on the excessive frugality of her dress, mixed with admiration of the purity of its motive, was an intimation to her to

be more elegant. He happened to admire a gown worn by a lady whom they had visited. She not only sent for the same materials, but had it made by the same pattern. A little attention of which he felt the delicacy.

"He not only saw, but in no long time acknowledged, that a religion which produced such admirable effects, could not be so mischievous a principle as he had supposed, nor could it be an inert principle. Her prudence has accomplished what her piety began. She always watched the turn of his eye, to see how far she might venture, and changed the discourse when the look was not encouraging. She never tired him with lectures, never obtruded serious discourse unseasonably, nor prolonged it improperly. His early love of reading, which had for some years given way to more turbulent pleasures, he has resumed; and frequently insists, that the books he reads to her shall be of her own chusing. In this choice she exercises the nicest discretion, selecting such as may gently lead his mind to higher pursuits, but which at the same time are so elegantly written as not to disgust his taste. In all this Mrs. Stanley is her friend and counsellor.

"While Mrs. Carlton is advancing her husband's relish for books of piety, he is forming hers to polite literature. She herself often proposes an amusing book, that he may not suspect her of a wish to abridge his innocent gratifications; and by this complaisance she gains more than she loses, for, not to be outdone in generosity, he often proposes some pious one in return. Thus their mutual sacrifices are mutual benefits. She has found out

that he has a highly cultivated understanding, and he has discovered, that she has a mind remarkably susceptible of cultivation. He has by degrees dropt most of his former associates, and has entirely renounced the diversions into which they led him. He is become a frequent and welcome visitor here. His conduct is uniformly respectable, and I look forward with hope to his becoming even a shining character. There is, however a pertinacity, I may say a sincerity, in his temper, which somewhat keeps him back. He will never adopt any principle without the most complete conviction of his own mind; nor profess any truth of which he himself does not actually feel the force."

Lady Belfield, after thanking Mr. Stanley for his interesting little narrative, earnestly requested that Sir John would renew his acquaintance with Mr. Carlton, that she herself might be enabled to profit by such an affecting example of the power of genuine religion, as his wife exhibited; confessing that one such living instance would weigh more with her than a hundred arguments. Mrs. Stanley obligingly promised to invite them to dinner the first leisure day.

Mr. Stanley now informed us that Sir George Aston was arrived from Cambridge, on a visit to his mother and sisters; that he was a youth of great promise whom he begged to introduce to us as a young man in whose welfare he took a lively concern, and on the right formation of whose character much would depend, as he had a large estate, and the family interest in the country would give him a very considerable influence; to this influence it was, therefore, of great importance to give

a right direction. We next morning took a ride to Aston Hall, and I commenced an acquaintance with the engaging young baronet, which I doubt not, from what I saw and heard, will hereafter ripen into friendship.

CHAP. XIX.

THE good rector joined the party at dinner. The conversation afterwards happened to turn on the value of human opinion, and Sir John Belfield made the hackneyed observation, that the desire of obtaining it should never be discouraged, it being highly useful as a motive of action.

"Yes," said Dr. Barlow, "it certainly has its uses in a world, the affairs of which must be chiefly carried on by worldly men; a world which is itself governed by low motives. But human applause is not a Christian principle of action; nay, it is so adverse to christianity, that our Saviour himself assigns it as a powerful cause of men's not believing, or at least not confessing him, *because they loved the praise of men.* The eager desire of fame is a sort of separation line between Paganism and Christianity. The ancient philosophers have left us many shining examples of moderation in earthly things, and of the contempt of riches. So far the light of reason, and a noble self-

denial carried them; and many a Christian may blush at these instances of their superiority; but of an indifference to fame, of a deadness to human applause, except as founded on loftiness of spirit, disdain of their judges, and self-sufficient pride, I do not recollect any instance."

"And yet," said Sir John, "I remember Seneca says in one of his epistles, that no man expresses such a respect and devotion to virtue, as he who forfeits the *repute* of being a good man, that he may not forfeit the *conscience* of being such."

"They might," replied Mr. Stanley, "incidentally express some such sentiment, in a well turned period, to give antithesis to an expression, or weight to an apothegm; they might declaim against it in a fit of disappointment, in the burst of indignation excited by a recent loss of popularity; but I question if they ever once acted upon it. I question if Marius himself, sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, actually felt it. Seldom if ever, does it seem to have been inculcated as a principle, or enforced as a rule of action: nor could it—it was "against the canon law of their foundation."

Sir John. "Yet a good man struggling with adversity is, I think, represented by one of their authors, as an object worthy of the attention of the gods."

Stanley. "Yes—but the divine approbation alone was never proposed as the standard of right, or the reward of actions, except by divine revelation."

"Nothing seems more difficult," said I, "to settle than the standard of right. Every man has a standard of his own, which he considers as of uni-

versal application. One makes his own tastes, desires, and appetites, his rule of right; another the example of certain individuals, fallible like himself; a third, and indeed the generality, the maxims, habits, and manners of the fashionable part of the world."

Sir John. "But since it is so difficult to discriminate between allowable indulgence, and criminal conformity, the life of a conscientious man, if he be not constitutionally temperate, or habitually firm, must be poisoned with solitude, and perpetually racked with the fear of exceeding his limits."

Stanley. "My dear Belfield, the peace and security of a Christian, we well know, are not left to depend on constitutional temperance, or habitual firmness. These are, as the young Numidian says,

Perfections that are placed in bones and nerves.

There is a higher and surer way to prevent the solicitude, which is, by correcting the principle; to get the heart set aright; to be jealous over ourselves; to be careful never to venture to the edge of our lawful limits; in short, and that is the only infallible standard, to live in the conscientious practice of measuring all we say, and do, and think, by the unerring rule of God's word.

Sir John. "The impossibility of reaching the perfection which that rule requires, sometimes discourages well-meaning men, as if the attempt were hopless.

Dr. Barlow. "That is, Sir, because they take up with a kind of hearsay Christianity. Its reputed pains and penalties drive them off from enquiring for themselves. They rest on the surface. If

they would go deeper, they would see that the spirit which dictated the scripture is a spirit of power as well as a spirit of promise. All that he requires us to do, he enables us to perform. He does not prescribe "rules" without furnishing us with "arms."

In answer to some further remarks of Sir John, who spoke with due abhorrence of any instance of actual vice, but who seemed to have no just idea of its root and principle, Dr, Barlow observed: While every one agrees in reprobating wicked actions, few, comparatively, are aware of the natural and habitual evil which lurks in the heart. To this the bible particularly directs our attention. In describing a bad character, it does not say that his *actions* are flagitious, but that 'God is not in all his *thoughts*.' This is the description of a thoroughly worldly man. Those who are given up completely to the world, to its maxims, its principles, its cares, or its pleasures, cannot entertain thoughts of God. And to be unmindful of his providence, to be regardless of his presence, to be insensible to his mercies, must be nearly as offensive to Him as to deny his existence. Excessive dissipation, a supreme love of money, or an entire devotedness to ambition, drinks up that spirit, swallows up that affection, exhausts that vigour, starves that zeal, with which a Christian should devote himself to serve his Maker.

"Pray observe," continued Dr. Barlow, "that I am not speaking of avowed profligates, but of decent characters; men who, while they are pursuing with keen intenseness the great objects of their attachment, do not deride or even totally neg-

lect religious observances; yet think they do much and well, by affording some odd scraps of refuge time to a few weary prayers, and sleepy thoughts, from a mind worn down with engagements of pleasure, or projects of accumulation, or schemes of ambition. In all these several pursuits, there may be nothing which, to the gross perceptions of the world, would appear to be moral turpitude. The pleasure may not be profligacy, the wealth so cherished may not have been fraudulently obtained, the ambition, in human estimation, may not be dishonourable; but an alienation from God, an indifference to eternal things, a spirit incompatible with the spirit of the gospel, will be found at the bottom of all these restless pursuits."

"I am entirely of your opinion, Doctor," said Mr. Stanley; "it is taking up with something short of real Christianity; it is an apostacy from the doctrines of the bible; it is the substitution of a spurious and popular religion, for that which was revealed from Heaven; it is a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, that has so fatally sunk our morality, and given countenance to that low standard of practical virtue which prevails. If we lower the principle, if we obscure the light, if we reject the influence, if we sully the purity, if we abridge the strictness of the divine law, there will remain no ascending power in the soul, no stirring spirit, no quickening aspiration after perfection, no stretching forward after that holiness to which the beatific vision is specifically promised. It is vain to expect that the practice will rise higher than the principle which inspires it; that

the habits will be superior to the motives which govern them."

Dr. Barlow. "Selfishness, security, and sensuality, are predicted by our Saviour, as the character of the last times. In alluding to the antediluvian world, and the cause of its destruction, eating, drinking, and marrying, could not be named in the gospel as things censurable in themselves, they being necessary to the very existence of that world, which the abuse of them was tending to destroy. Our Saviour does not describe criminality by the excess but by the spirit of the act. He speaks of eating not gluttony, of drinking not intoxication, of marriage not licentious intercourse. This seems a plain intimation, that carrying on the transactions of the world in the spirit of the world, and that habitual deadness to the concerns of eternity, in being so alive to the pleasures or the interests of the present moment, do not indicate a state of safety, even where gross acts of vice may be rare."

Mr. Stanley. "It is not by a few, or even by many instances of excessive wickedness, that the moral state of a country is to be judged, but by a general averseness and indifference to *real* religion. A few examples of glaring impiety may furnish more subjects for declamation, but are not near so deadly a symptom. It is no new remark, that more men are undone by an excessive indulgence in things permitted, than by the commission of avowed sins."

Sir John. "How happy are those, who, by their faith and piety, are delivered from these difficulties!"

Stanley. "My dear Belfield, where are those privileged beings? It is one sad proof of human infirmity, that the best men have continually these things to struggle with. What makes the difference is, that those whom we call good men struggle on to the end, while the others, not seeing the danger, do not struggle at all."

"Christians," said Dr. Barlow, "who would strictly keep within the bounds prescribed by their religion, should imitate the ancient Romans, who carefully watched that their god Terminus, who defined their limits, should never recede; the first step of his retreat, they said, would be the destruction of their security."

Sir John. "But Doctor, pray what remedy do you recommend against this natural, I had almost said this invincible propensity to overvalue the world? I do not mean a propensity merely to overrate its pleasures and its honours, but a disposition to yield to its dominion over the mind, to indulge a too earnest desire of standing well with it, to cherish a too anxious regard for its good opinion?"

Dr. Barlow. "The knowledge of the disease should precede the application of the remedy.—Human applause is by a worldly man reckoned not only among the luxries of life, but among articles of the first necessity. An undue desire to obtain it has certainly its foundation in vanity; and it is one of our grand errors to reckon vanity a trivial fault. An over-estimation of character, and an anxious wish to conciliate all suffrages, is an infirmity from which even worthy men are not exempt; nay it is a weakness from which, if they are

not governed by a strict religious principle, worthy men are in most danger. Reputation being in itself so very desirable a good, those who actually possess it, and in some sense deserve to possess it, are apt to make it their standard, and to rest in it as their supreme aim and end."

Sir John. "You have exposed the latent principle, it remains that you suggest its cure."

Dr. Barlow. "I believe the most effectual remedy would be, to excite in the mind frequent thoughts of our divine Redeemer, and of *his* estimate of that world on which we so fondly set our affections, and whose approbation we are too apt to make the chief object of our ambition."

Sir John. "I allow it to have been necessary, that Christ in the great end which he had to accomplish, should have been poor, and neglected, and contemned, and that he should have trampled on the great things of this world, human applause among the rest; but I do not conceive that this obligation extends to his followers, nor that we are called upon to partake the poverty which he preferred, or to renounce the wealth and grandeur which he set at nought, or to imitate him in making himself of no reputation."

Dr. Barlow. "We are not indeed called to resemble him in his external circumstances. It is not our bounden duty to be necessarily exposed to the same contempt; nor are we obliged to embrace the same ignominy. Yet it seems a natural consequence of our Christian profession, that the things which he despised we should not venerate; the vanities he trampled on, we should not admire; the world which he censured, we ought

not to idolize; the ease which he renounced we should not rate too highly; the fame which he set at nought, we ought not anxiously to covet. Surely the followers of him who was "despised and rejected of men" should not seek their highest gratification from the flattery and applause of men. The truth is, in all discourses on this subject, we are compelled continually to revert to the observation, that Christianity is a religion of the *heart*. And though we are not called upon to partake the poverty and meanness of his situation, yet the precept is clear and direct, respecting the temper by which we should be governed. "Let the same *mind* be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." If, therefore, we happen to possess that wealth and grandeur which he disdained, we should *possess them as though we possessed them not*. We have a fair and liberal permission to use them as his gift, and to his glory, but not to erect them into the supreme objects of our attachment. In the same manner, in every other point, it is still the spirit of the act, the temper of the mind to which we are to look. For instance, I do not think that I am obliged to shew my faith by sacrificing my son, nor my obedience by selling all that I have to give to the poor; but I think I am bound by the spirit of these two powerful commands, to practise a cheerful acquiescence in the whole will of God, in suffering and renouncing, as well as in doing, when I know what is really his will."

CHAP. XX.

THE pleasant reflections excited by the interesting conversation of the evening were cruelly interrupted by my faithful Edwards. "Sir," said he, when he came to attend me, "do you know that all the talk of the Hall to night at supper was, that Miss Stanley is going to be married to young Lord Staunton. He is a cousin of Mrs. Carlton's, and Mr. Stanley's coachman brought home the news from thence yesterday. I could not get at the very truth, because Mrs. Comfit was out of the way, but all the servants agree, that though he is a lord, and rich, and handsome, he is not half good enough for her. Indeed, Sir, they say he is no better than he should be."

I was thunderstruck at this intelligence. It was a trial I had not suspected. "Does he visit here then, Edwards," said I, "for I have neither seen nor heard of him." "No Sir," said he, "but Miss meets him at Mr. Carlton's." This shocked me beyond expression. Lucilla meet a man at another house! Lucilla carry on a clandestine engagement! Can Mrs. Carleton be capable of conniving at it! Yet if it were not clandestine, why should he not visit at the Grove."

These tormenting reflections kept me awake the whole night. To acquit Lucilla, Edwards's story made it difficult; to condemn her, my heart found it impossible. One moment I blamed my own foolish timidity, which had kept me back from making any proposal, and the next, I was glad that

the delay would enable to sift the truth, and to probe her character. "If I do not find consistency here," said I, "I shall renounce all confidence in human virtue."

I arose early, and went to indulge my meditations in the garden. I saw Mr. Stanley sitting under the favourite oak. I was instantly tempted to go and open my heart to him, but seing a book in his hand, I feared to interrupt him; and was turning into another walk, till I had acquired more composure. He called after me, and invited me to sit down.

How violent were my fluctuations! How inconsistent were my feelings! How much at variance was my reason with my heart! The man on earth with whom I wished to confer invited me to a conference. With a mind under the dominion of a passion which I was eager to declare, yet agitated with an uncertainty which I had as much reason to fear might be painfully as pleasantly removed; I stood doubtful whether to seize or to decline the occasion which thus presented itself to me. A moment's reflection however convinced me that the opportunity was too inviting to be neglected. My impatience for an eclaircissement on Lord Staunton's subject was too powerfull to be any longer resisted.

At length with the most unfeigned diffidence, and a hesitation which I feared would render my words unintelligible, I ventured to express my tender admiration of Miss Stanley, and implored permission to address her.

My application did not seem to surprise him. He only gravely said, "we will talk of this some

future day." This cold and laconic reply instantly sunk my spirits. I was shocked and visibly confused. "It is too late," said I to myself, "Happy Lord Staunton!" He saw my distress, and taking my hand with the utmost kindness of voice and manner, said, "My dear young friend, content yourself for the present with the assurance of my entire esteem and affection. This is a very early declaration. You are scarcely acquainted with Lucilla; you do not yet know," added he smiling, "half her faults."

"Only tell me, my dear Sir," said I, a little re-assured, and grasping his hand, "that when you know all mine, you will not reject me. Only tell me that you feel no repugnance—that you have no other views—that Miss Stanley has no other"—here I stopt, my voice failed—the excess of my emotion prevented me from finishing my sentence. He encouragingly said, "I know not that Lucilla has any attachment. For myself, I have no views hostile to your wishes. You have a double interest in my heart. You are endeared to me by your personal merit, and by my tender friendship for your beloved father. But be not impetuous. Form no sudden resolution. Try to assure yourself of my daughter's affection before you ask it of her. Remain here another month as my welcome guest, as the son of my friend. Take that month to examine your own heart, and to endeavour to obtain an interest in her's; we will then resume the subject."

"But my dear Sir," said I, "is not Lord Staunton"—"Set your heart at rest," said he. "Though we are both a little aristocratic in our political

principles, yet when the competition is for the happiness of life, and the interests of virtue, both Lucilla and her father think with Dumont, that

"A lord,
"Opposed against a man, is but a man."

So saying, he quitted me; but with a benignity in his countenance and manner that infused not only consolation, but joy into my heart. My spirits were at once elated. To be allowed to think of Lucilla! To be permitted to attach myself to her! To be sure her heart was not engaged! To be invited to remain a month longer under the same roof with her—to see her—to hear her—to talk to her—all this was a happiness so great that I did not allow myself to repine, because it was not all I had wished to obtain.

I met Mrs. Stanley soon after. I perceived by her illuminated countenance, that my proposal had been already communicated to her. I ventured to take her hand, and with the most respectful earnestness intreated her friendship—her good offices. "I dare not trust myself with you just now," said she, with an affectionate smile; "Mr. Stanley will think I abet rebellion, if through my encouragement you should violate your engagements with him. But," added she, kindly pressing my hand; "you need not be much afraid of *me*. Mr. Stanley's sentiments on this point, as on all others, are exactly my own. We have but one heart and one mind, and that heart and mind are not unfavourable to your wishes." With a tear in her eyes and affection in her looks, she tore herself away, evidently afraid of giving way to her feelings.

I did not think myself bound by any point of honour to conceal the state of my heart from Sir John Belfield, who with his lady joined me soon after in the garden. I was astonished to find that my passion for Miss Stanley was no secret to either of them. Their penetration had left me nothing to disclose. Sir John however looked serious, and affected an air of mystery which a little alarmed me. "I own," said he, "there is some danger of your success." I eagerly inquired what he thought I had to fear? "You have every thing to fear," replied he, in a tone of grave irony, "which a man not four and twenty, of an honorable family, with a clear estate of four thousand a year, a person that all the ladies admire, a mind which all the men esteem, and a temper which endears you to men, women, and children, *can* fear from a little country girl, whose heart is as free as a bird, and who, if I may judge by her smiles and blushes whenever you are talking to her, would have no mortal objection to sing in the same cage with you."

"It will be a sad dull novel however," said Lady Belfield, "all is likely to go on so smoothly that we shall flag for want of incident. No difficulties, nor adventures to heighten the interest. No cruel step-dame, no tyrant father, no capricious mistress, no moated castle, no intriguing confidante, no treacherous spy, no formidable rival, not so much as a duel or even a challenge, I fear, to give variety to the monotonous scene."

I mentioned Edward's report respecting Lord Staunton, and owned how much it had disturbed me. "That he admires her," said Lady Belfield, "is notorious. That his addresses have not been

encouraged, I have also heard, but not from the family. As to Lucilla, she is the last girl that would ever insinuate even to me, to whom she is so unreserved, that she had rejected so great an offer. I have heard her express herself with an indignation, foreign to her general mildnes, against women who are guilty of this fashionable, this dishonourable indelicacy."

"Well, but Charles," said Sir John "you must positively assume a little dejection, to diversify the business. It will give interest to your countenance, and pathos to your manner, and tenderness to your accent. And you must forget all attentions, and neglect all civilities. And you must appear absent, and *distrait* and *revêur*; especially while your fate hangs in some suspense. And you must read Petrarch, and repeat Tibullus, and write sonnets. And when you are spoken to, you must not listen. And you must wander in the grove by moonshine, and talk to the Oreads, and the Dryads, and the Naiads—Oh no, unfortunately, I am afraid there are no Naiads within hearing. You must make the woods vocal with the name of Lucilla; luckily 'tis such a poetical name that Echo won't be ashamed to repeat it. I have gone through it all, Charles, and know every high way and bye way in the map of love. I will, however, be serious for one moment, and tell you for your comfort, that though at your age I was full as much in for it as you are now, yet after ten years union, Lady Belfield has enabled me to declare

How much the wife is dearer than the bride."

A tear glistened in her soft eyes, at this tender compliment.

Just at that moment, Lucilla happened to cross the lawn at a distance. At sight of her, I could not, as I pointed to her, forbear exclaiming in the words of Sir John's favorite poet,

> There doth beauty dwell,
> There most conspicuous, ev'n in outward shape,
> Where dawns the high expression of a MIND.

"This is very fine," said Sir John, sarcastically, "I admire all you young enthusiastic philosophers, with your intellectual refinement. You pretend to be captivated only with *mind*. I observe, however, that previous to your raptures, you always take care to get this mind lodged in a fair and youthful form. This mental beauty is always prudently inshrined in some elegant corporeal frame, before it is worshipped. I should be glad to see some of these intellectual adorers in love with the mind of an old or ugly woman. I never heard any of you fall into extasies in descanting on the mind of your grandmother." After some further irony, they left me to indulge my meditations, in the nature of which a single hour had made so pleasant a revolution.

CHAP. XXI.

THE conversation of two men bred at the same school or college, when they happen to meet afterwards, is commonly uninteresting, not to say tiresome, to a third person, as involving local circumstances in which he has no concern. But this was not always the case since the meeting of my two friends. Something was generally to be gained by their communications even on these unpromising topics.

At breakfast Mr. Stanley said, "Sir John, you will see here at dinner to-morrow our old college acquaintance, Ned Tyrrel. Though he does not commonly live at the family house in this neighbourhood, but at a little place he has in Buckinghamshire; he comes amongst us periodically to receive his rents. He always invites himself, for his society is not the most engaging."

"I heard," replied Sir John, "that he became a notorious profligate after he left Cambridge, though I have lost sight of him ever since we parted there. But I was glad to learn lately that he is become quite a reformed man."

"He is so far reformed," replied Mr. Stanley, "that he is no longer grossly licentious. But in laying down the vices of youth, he has taken up successively those which he thought better suited to the successive stages of his progress. As he withdrew himself from his loose habits and connections, ambition became his governing passion;

he courted public favour, thirsted for place and distinction, and laboured by certain obliquities and some little sacrifices of principle, to obtain promotion. Finding it did not answer, and all his hopes failing, he now rails at ambition, wonders men will wound their consciences and renounce their peace for vain applause and 'the bubble reputation.' His sole delight at present, I hear, is in amassing money and reading controversial divinity. Avarice has supplanted ambition, just as ambition expelled profligacy.

"In the interval in which he was passing from one of these stages to the other, in a very uneasy state of mind, he dropped in by accident where a famous irregular preacher was disseminating his Antinomian doctrines. Caught by his vehement but coarse eloquence, and captivated by an alluring doctrine which promised much while it required little, he adopted the soothing but fallacious tenet. It is true, I hear he is become a more respectable man in his conduct, but I doubt, though I have not lately seen him, if his present state may not be rather worse than his former ones.

"In the two previous stages, he was disturbed and dissatisfied. Here he has taken up his rest. Out of this strong hold, it is not probable that any subsequent vice will ever drive him, or true religion draw him. He sometimes attends public worship, but as he thinks no part of it but the sermon of much value, it is only when he likes the preacher. He has little notion of the respect due to established institutions, and does not heartily like any precomposed forms of prayer, not even our incomparable Liturgy. He reads such reli-

gious books only as tend to establish his own opinions, and talks and disputes loudly on certain doctrinal points. But an accumulating Christian, and a Christian who, for the purpose of accumulation, is said to be uncharitable, and even somewhat oppressive, is a paradox which I cannot solve, and an anomaly which I cannot comprehend. Covetousness is, as I said, a more creditable vice than Ned's former ones, but for that very reason more dangerous."

"From this sober vice," said I, "proceeded the blackest crime ever perpetrated by human wickedness; for it does not appear that Judas, in his direful treason, was instigated by malice. It is observable, that when our Saviour names this sin, it is with an emphatical warning, as knowing its mischief to be greater because its scandal was less. Not contented with a single caution, he doubles his exhortation. '*take heed* and *beware* of covetousness.' "

After some remarks of Sir John which I do not recollect, Mr. Stanley said, "I did not intend making a philippic against covetousness, a sin to which I believe no one here is addicted. Let us not, however, plume ourselves in not being guilty of a vice, to which, as we have no natural bias, so in not committing it, we resist no temptation. What I meant to insist on was, that exchanging a turbulent for a quiet sin, or a scandalous for an orderly one, is not reformation; or, if you will allow me the strong word, is not conversion."

Mr. Tyrrel, according to his appointment, came to dinner, and brought with him his nephew, Mr. Edward Tyrrel, whom he had lately entered at the

university, with a design to prepare him for holy orders. He was a well disposed young man, but his previous education was said to have been very much neglected, and he was rather deficient in the necessary learning. Mr. Stanley had heard that Tyrrel had two reasons for breeding him to the church. In the first place, he fancied it was the cheapest profession, and in the next he had laboured to infuse into him some particular opinions of his own, which he wished to disseminate through his nephew. Sir George Aston having accidentally called, he was prevailed on to stay, and Dr. Barlow was of the party.

Mr. Tyrrel, by his observations, soon enabled us to discover that his religion had altered nothing but his language. He seemed evidently more fond of controversy than of truth, and the whole turn of his conversation indicated that he derived his religious security rather from the adoption of a party, than from the implantation of a new principle. "His discourse is altered," said Mr. Stanley to me afterwards, "but I greatly fear his heart and affections remain unchanged."

Mr. Stanley contrived, for the sake of his two academical guests, particularly young Tyrrel, to divert the conversation to the subject of learning, more especially clerical learning.

In answer to a remark of mine on the satisfaction I had felt in seeing such a happy union of learning and piety in two clergymen who had lately dined at the Grove, Mr. Stanley said, "Literature is an excellent thing, when it is not the best thing a man has. It can surely be no offence to our Maker to cultivate carefully his highest natu-

ral gift, our reason. In pious men it is peculiarly important, as the neglect of such cultivation, in certain individuals, has led to much error in religion, and given much just offence to the irreligious, who are very sharp sighted to the faults of pious characters. I, therefore, truly rejoice to see a higher tone of literature now prevailing, especially in so many of our pious young divines; the deficiency of learning in some of their well meaning predecessors, having served to bring not only themselves, but religion also into contempt, especially with men who have only learning.

Tyrrel. "I say nothing against the necessity of learning in a lawyer, because it may help him to lead a judge, and to mislead a jury; nor in a physician, because it may advance his credit by enabling him to conceal the deficiencies of his art; nor in a private gentleman, because it may keep him out of worse mischief. But I see no use of learning in the clergy. There is my friend Dr. Barlow. I would willingly give up all his learning, if he would go a little deeper into the doctrines he professes to preach."

Mr. Stanley. "I should indeed think Dr. Barlow's various knowledge of little value, did he exhibit the smallest deficiency in the great points to which you allude. But when I am persuaded that his learning is so far from detracting from his piety, that it enables him to render it more extensively useful, I cannot wish him dipossessed of that knowledge which adorns his religion without diminishing its good effects."

Tyrrel. "You will allow that those first great publishers of Christianity, the Apostles, had none *of this vain learning.*"

Stanley. "It is frequently pleaded by the despisers of learning, that the Apostles were illiterate. The fact is too notorious, and the answer too obvious to require to be dwelt upon. But it is unfortunately adduced to illustrate a position to which it can never apply, the vindication of an unlettered clergy. It is a hacknied remark, but not the less true for being old, that the wisdom of God chuse to accomplish the first promulgation of the gospel by illiterate men, to prove that the work was his own, and that its success depended not on the instruments employed, but on the divinity of the truth itself. But if the Almighty chose to establish his religion by miracles, he chuses to carry it on by means. And he no more sends an ignorant peasant or fisherman to instruct men in christianity now, than he appointed a Socrates or a Plato to be its publishers at first. As, however, there is a great difference in the situations, so there may be a proportionable difference allowed in the attainments of the clergy. I do not say it is necessary for every village curate to be a profound scholar; but as he may not always remain in obscurity, there is no necessity for his being a contemptible one."

Sir John. "What has been said of those who affect to despise birth, has been applied also to those who decry learning; neither is ever undervalued, except by men who are destitute of them: and it is worthy of observation, that as literature and religion both sunk together in the dark ages, so both emerged at the same auspicious æra."

Mr. Sanley finding that Dr. Barlow was not forward to embark in a subject which he considered as rather personal, said, "Is it presumptuous to

observe, that though the Apostles were unlettered men, yet those instruments who were to be employed in services singularly difficult, the Almighty condescended partly to fit for their peculiar work by great human attainments. The apostle of the Gentiles was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and Moses, who was destined to the high office of a great legislator, was instructed in all the wisdom of the most learned nation then existing. The Jewish lawgiver, though under the guidance of inspiration itself, did not fill his station the worse for this preparatory institution. To how important a use the apostle converted *his* erudition, we may infer from his conduct in the most learned and polished assembly in the world. He did not unnecessarily exasperate the polite Athenians by coarse upbraiding, or illiterate clamour, but he attacked them on their own ground. With what discriminating wisdom, with what powerful reasoning, did he unfold to them that God whom they ignorantly worshipped! With what temper, with what elegance did he expose their shallow theology! Had he been as unacquainted with *their* religion, as they were with *his*, he had wanted the appropriate ground on which to build his instruction. He seized on the inscription of their own pagan altar, as a text from which to preach the doctrines of Christianity. From his knowledge of their errors, he was enabled to advance the cause of truth. He made their poetry, which he quoted, and their mythology, which he would not have been able to explode, if he had not understood it, a thesis from which to deduce the doctrine of the Resurrection. Thus softening their prejudices, and letting them

see the infinite superiority of that Christianity which he enforced, to the mere learning and mental cultivation on which they so highly valued themselves. By the same sober discretion, accurate reasoning, and graceful elegance, he afterwards obtained a patient hearing, and a favourable judgment from king Agrippa."

Dr. Barlow. "It has always appeared to me, that a strong reason why the younger part of a clergyman's life should be in a good measure devoted to learning, is, that he may afterwards discover its comparative vanity. It would have been a less difficult task for St. Paul to profess that he renounced all things for religion, if he had had nothing to renounce; and to count all things as dross in the comparison, if he had had no gold to put in the empty scale. Gregory Nazianzen, one of the most accomplished masters of Greek literature, declared that the chief value which he set upon it was, that in possessing it, he had something of worth in itself to esteem as nothing in comparison of Christian truth. And it is delightful to hear Seldon and Grotius, and Pascal and Salmasius, whom I may be allowed to quote, without being suspected of professional prejudice, as none of them were clergymen, while they warmly recommended to others that learning of which they themselves were the most astonishing examples, at the same time dedicating their lives to the advancement of religion. It is delightful, I say, to hear them acknowledge that their learning was only valuable as it put it in their power to promote Christianity, and to have something to sacrifice for its sake."

Tyrrel. "I can willingly allow that a poet, a dramatic poet especially, may study the works of the great critics of antiquity with some profit; but that a Christian writer of sermons can have any just ground for studying a pagan critic, is to me quite inconceivable."

Stanley. "And yet, Mr. Tyrrel, a sermon is a work which demands regularity of plan, as well as a poem. It requires too something of the same unity, arrangement, divisions, and lucid order as a tragedy; something of the exordium and the peroration which belong to the composition of the orator. I do not mean that he is constantly to exhibit all this, but he should always understand it. And a discreet clergyman, especially one who is to preach before auditors of the higher rank, and who, in order to obtain respect from them, wishes to excel in the art of composition, will scarcely be less attentive to form his judgment by some acquaintance with Longinus and Quintilian than a dramatic poet. A writer of verse, it is true, may please to a certain degree by the force of mere genius, and a writer of sermons will instruct by the mere power of his piety; but neither the one nor the other will ever write well, if they do not possess the principles of good writing, and form themselves on the models of good writers."

"Writing," said Sir John, "to a certain degree is an art, or, if you please, a trade. And as no man is allowed to set up in an ordinary trade till he has served a long apprenticeship to its *mysteries* (the word I think used in indentures); so no man should set up for a writer till he knows somewhat of the mysteries of the art he is about to practice. He

may, after all, if he wants talents, produce a vapid and inefficient book; but possess what talents he may, he will, without knowledge, produce a crude and indigested one."

Tyrrel. "Still I insist upon it, that in a Christian minister the lustre of learning is tinsel, and human wisdom folly."

Stanley. "I am entirely of your opinion, if he rest in his learning as an *end* instead of using it as a *means*; if the fame, or the pleasure, or even the human profit of learning be his ultimate object. Learning in a clergyman without religion is dross, is nothing; not so religion without learning. I am persuaded that much good is done by men who, though deficient in this respect, are abundant in zeal and piety; but the good they do arises from the exertion of their piety, and not from the deficiency of their learning. Their labours are beneficial from the talent they exercise, and not from their want of another talent. The spirit of God can work, and often does work, by feeble instruments, and divine truth, by its own omnipotent energy, can effect its own purposes. But particular instances do not go to prove that the instrument ought not to be fitted and polished, and sharpened for its allotted work. Every student should be emulously watchful that he do not diminish the stock of professional credit by his idleness; he should be stimulated to individual exertion, by bearing in mind that the English clergy have always been allowed by foreigners to be the most learned body in the world."

Dr. Barlow. "What Mr. Stanley has said of the value of knowledge, does not at all militate against

such fundamental prime truths as—'This is eternal life to *know* God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.—I desire to *know* nothing, save Jesus Christ. The natural man cannot *know* the things of the spirit of God. The world by wisdom *knew* not God,' and a hundred other such passages."

Tyrrel. "Aye, Doctor, now you talk a little more like a Christian minister. But from the greater part of what has been asserted, you are all of you such advocates for human reason and human learning, as to give an air of paganism to your sentiments."

Stanley. "It does not diminish the utility, though it abases the pride of learning, that Christianity did not come into the world by human discovery, or the disquisitions of reason, but by immediate revelation. Those who adopt your way of thinking, Mr. Tyrrel, should bear in mind, that the work of God, in changing the heart, is not intended to supply the place of the human faculties. God expects, in his most highly favoured servants, the diligent exercise of their natural powers; and if any human being has a stronger call for the exercise of wisdom and judgment than another, it is a religious clergyman. Christianity does not supersede the use of natural gifts, but turns them into their proper channel.

"One distinction has often struck me. The enemy of mankind seizes on the soul through the medium of the passions and senses: the divine friend of man addresses him through his rational powers—*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*, says the Apostle."

Here I ventured to observe, that the highest panegyric bestowed on one of the brightest luminaries

of our church, is, that his name is seldom mentioned without the epithet *judicious* being prefixed to it. Yet does Hooker want fervour? Does Hooker want zeal? Does Hooker want courage in declaring the whole counsel of God?

Sir John. "I hope we have now no clergyman to whom we may apply the biting sarcasm of Dr. South, on some of the popular but illiterate preachers of the opposite party in his day, 'that there was all the confusion of Babel, without the gift of tongues.'"

Stanley. "And yet that party produced some great scholars, and many eminently pious men. But look back to that day, and especially to the period a little antecedent to it, at those prodigies of erudition, the old bishops and other divines of our Church. They were, perhaps, somewhat too profuse of their learning in their discourses, or rather they were so brimful, that they involuntarily overflowed. A juster taste, in our time, avoids that lavish display, which then not only crowded the margin, but forced itself into every part of the body of the work. The display of erudition might be wrong, but one thing is clear, it proved they had it; and as Dryden said, when he was accused of having too much wit, 'after all it is a good crime.'"

"We may justly," said Dr. Barlow, "in the refinement of modern taste, censure their prolixity, and ridicule their redundancies; we may smile at their divisions, which are numberless; and at their sub-divisions, which are endless; we may allow that this labour for perspicuity sometimes produced perplexity. But let us confess they always

went to the bottom of whatever they embarked in. They ransacked the stores of ancient learning, and the treasures of modern science, not to indulge their vanity by obtruding their acquirements, but to prove, to adorn, and to illustrate the doctrine they delivered. How incredible must their industry have been, when the bare transcript of their voluminous folios seems alone sufficient to have occupied a long life!".

"The method," said I, "which they adopted of saying every thing that could be said on all topics, and exhausting them to the very dregs, though it may and does tire the patience of the reader, yet it never leaves him ignorant; and of two evils, had not an author better be tedious than superficial? From an overflowing vessel you may gather more indeed than you want, but from an empty one you can gather nothing."

Tyrrel. "It appears to me that you wish to make a clergyman every thing but a Christian, and to bestow upon him every requisite except faith."

Stanley. "God forbid that I should make any comparison between human learning and Christian principle; the one is indeed lighter than the dust of the balance, when weighed against the other. All I contend for is, that they are not incompatible, and that human knowledge, used only in subservency to that of the scriptures, may advance the interests of religion. For the better elucidation of those scriptures, a clergyman should know not a little of ancient languages. Without some insight into remote history and antiquities, especially the Jewish, he will be unable to explain many of

the manners and customs recorded in the sacred volume. Ignorance in some of these points, has drawn many attacks on our religion from sceptical writers. As to a thorough knowledge of ecclesiastical history, it would be superfluous to recommend that, it being the history of his own immediate profession. It is therefore requisite, not only for the general purposes of instruction, but that he may be enabled to guard against modern innovation, by knowing the origin and progress of the various heresies with which the church in all ages has been infested."

Tyrrel. "But he may be thoroughly acquainted with all this, and not have one spark of light."

Dr. Barlow. "He may indeed, with deep concern I allow it. I will go further. The pride of learning, when not subdued by religion, may help to extinguish that spark. Reason has been too much decried by one party and too much deified by the other. The difference between reason and revelation seems to be the same as between the eye and the light; the one is the organ of vision, the other the source of illumination."

Tyrrel. "Take notice, Stanley, that if I can help it, I'll never attend your accomplished clergyman."

Stanley. (Smiling) "I have not yet completed the circle of his accomplishments. Besides what we call book learning, there is another species of knowledge in which some truly good men are sadly deficient, I mean an acquaintance with human nature. The knowledge of the world, and of Him who made it; the study of the heart of man, and of Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand, enable a minister to excel in the art of instruction;

one kind of knowledge reflecting light upon the other. The knowledge of mankind, then, I may venture to assert, is next to religion, one of the first requisites of a preacher; and I cannot help ascribing the little success which has sometimes attended the ministry of even worthy men to their want of this grand ingredient. It will diminish the use they might make of the great doctrines of our religion, if they are ignorant of the various modifications of the human character to which those doctrines are to be addressed.

"As no man ever made a true poet without this talent, one may venture to say, that few without it have ever made eminent preachers. Destitute of this, the most elaborate addresses will be only random shot, which, if they hit, will be more owing to chance than to skill. Without this knowledge, warmed by Christian affection, guided by Christian judgment, and tempered with Christian meekness, a clergyman will not be able in the pulpit to accommodate himself to the various wants of his hearers; without this knowledge, in his private spiritual visits, he will resemble those empirics in medicine who have but one method of treatment for all diseases, and who apply indiscriminately the same pill and the same drop to the various distempers of all ages, sexes, and constitutions. This spirit of accommodation does not consist in falsifying, or abridging, or softening, or disguising any truth; but in applying truth in every form, communicating it in every direction, and diverting it into every channel. Some good men seem sadly to forget that precept—*making a difference*—for they act as if all characters were exactly alike."

Tyrrel. "You talk as if you would wish clergymen to depart from the singleness of the truth, and preach two gospels."

Stanley. "Far from it. But though truth is single, the human character is multiplied almost to infinity, and cannot be addressed with advantage if it be not well understood. I am ashamed of having said so much on such a subject in presence of Dr. Barlow, who is silent through delicacy. I will only add, that a learned young clergyman is not driven for necessary relaxation to improper amusements. His mind will be too highly set, to be satisfied with those light diversions which purloin time without affording the necessary renovation to the body and spirits, which is the true and lawful end of all amusement. In all circumstances, learning confers dignity on his character. It enables him to raise the tone of general conversation, and is a safe kind of medium with persons of a higher class who are not religious; and it will always put it in his power to keep the standard of intercourse above the degrading topics of diversions, sports and vulgar gossip."

Dr. Barlow. "You see, Mr. Tyrrel, that a prudent combatant thinks only of defending himself on that side where he is assaulted. If Mr. Stanley's antagonist had been a vehement advocate for clerical learning as the great essential of his profession, he would have been the first to caution him against the pride and inflation which often attend learning, when not governed by religion. Learning not so governed might injure Christian humility, and thus become a far more formidable enemy to religion than that which it was called in to oppose."

Sir John said, smiling, "I will not apply to the clergy what Rasselas says to Imlac, after he had been enumerating the numberless qualities necessary to the perfection of the poetic art—'Thou hast convinced me that no man can be a poet;'—but if all Stanley says be just, I will venture to assert that no common share of industry and zeal will qualify a young student for that sacred profession. I have indeed, no experience on the subject, as it relates to the clerical order, but I conceive in general, that learning is the best human preservative of virtue; that it safely fills up leisure, and honourably adorns life, even where it does not form the business of it."

"Learning too," said I, "has this strong recommendation, that it is the offspring of a most valuable virtue, I mean industry; a quality on which I am ashamed to see Pagans frequently set a higher value than we seem to do."

"I believe indeed," replied Sir John, "that the ancients had a higher idea of industry and severe application than we have. Tully calls them the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, and Alexander said that slaves might indulge in sloth, but that it was a most royal thing to labour."

Stanley. "It has been the error of sensible men of the world, to erect talents and learning into idols, which they would have universally and exclusively worshipped. This has perhaps driven some religious men into such a fear of over-cultivating learning, that they do not cultivate it at all. Hence the intervals between their religious employments, and intervals there must be while we are invested with these frail bodies, are languid and

insipid, wasted in trifling and sauntering. Nay it is well if this disoccupation of the intellect do not lead from sloth to improper indulgences."

"You are perfectly right," said Sir John, "our worthy friend Thompson is a living illustration of your remark. He was at college with us; he brought from thence a competent share of knowledge; has a fair understanding, and the manners of a gentleman. For several years past, he has not only adopted a religious character, but is truly pious. As he is much in earnest, he very properly assigns a considerable proportion of his time to religious reading. But as he is of no profession, the intermediate hours often hang heavy on his hands. He continues to live in some measure in the world, without the inconsistency of entering into its pursuits; but, having renounced the study of human learning, and yet accustomed himself to mix occasionally with general society, he has few subjects in common with his company, but is dull and silent in all rational conversation, of which religion is not the professed object. He takes so little interest in any literary or political discussion however useful, that is evident nothing but his good breeding prevents his falling asleep. At the same time, he scruples not to violate consistency in another respect, for his table is so elaborately luxurious, that it seems as if he were willing to add to the pleasures of sense, what he deducts from those of intellect."

"I have often thought," said Mr. Stanley of sending him Dr. Barrow's *three sermons on industry in our calling as Christians, industry as gentlemen, and industry as scholars*; which sermons, by

the way, I intended to have made my son read at least once a year, had he lived, that he might see the consistency, the compatibility, nay the analogy of the two latter with the former. I wish the spirit of these three discourses was infused into every gentleman, every scholar, and every Christian through the land. For my own part, I should have sedulously laboured to make my son a sound scholar; while I should have laboured still more sedulously to convince him that the value of learning depends solely on the purposes to which it is devoted. I would have a Christian Gentleman able to beat the world at its own weapons, and convince it, that it is not from penury of mind, or inability to distinguish himself in other matters, that he applies himself to seek that wisdom which is from above; that he does not fly to religion as a shelter from the ignominy of ignorance, but from a deep conviction of the comparative vanity of that very learning, which he yet is so assiduous to acquire.

During this conversation, it was amusing to observe the different impressions made on the minds of our two college guests. Young Tyrrel, who, with moderate parts and slender application, had been taught to adopt some of his uncle's dogmas, as the cheapest way of being wise, greedily swallowed his eulogium of clerical ignorance, which the young man seemed to feel as a vindication of his own neglected studies, and an encouragement to his own mediocrity of intellect. While the interesting young baronet, though silent through modesty, discovered in his intelligent eyes, evident marks of satisfaction, in hearing that literature,

for which he was every day acquiring a higher relish, warmly recommended as the best pursuit of a gentleman, by the two men in the world, for whose judgment he entertained the highest reverence. At the same time it raised his veneration for Christian piety, when he saw it so sedulously practised by these advocates for human learning.

CHAP. XXII.

DURING these conversations, I remarked that Lucilla, though she commonly observed the most profound silence, had her attention always rivetted on the speaker. If that speaker was Dr. Barlow, or her father, or any one of whom she thought entitled to particular respect, she gently laid down her work, and as quietly resumed it when they had done speaking.

I observed to Sir John Belfield, afterwards, as we were walking together, how modestly flattering her manner was when any of us were reading! How intelligent her silence! How well bred her attention!

"I have often contrasted it," replied he, "with the manner of some other ladies of my acquaintance, who are sometimes of our quiet evening party. When one is reading history, or any ordinary book aloud to them, I am always pleased that they

should pursue their little employments. It amuses themselves, and gives ease and familiarity to the social circle. But while I have been reading, as has sometimes happened, a passage of the highest sublimity, or most tender interest, I own I feel a little indignant to see the shuttle plied with as eager assiduity, as if the destinies themselves were weaving the thread. I have known a lady take up the candlestick to search for her netting-pin, in the midst of Cato's soliloquy; or stoop to pick up her scissars, while Hamlet says to the ghost, 'I'll go no further.' I remember another who would whisper across the table to borrow thread while Lear has been raving in the storm, or Macbeth starting at the spirit of Banquo; and make signs for a thread-paper, while cardinal Beaufort 'dies, and makes no sign.' Nay, once I remember when I was with much agitation hurrying through the gazette of the battle of Trafalgar, while I pronounced, almost agonized, the last memorable words of the immortal Nelson, I heard one lady whisper to another that she had broke her needle."

"It would be difficult to determine," replied I, "whether this inattention most betrays wants of sense, of feeling, or of good breeding. The habit of attention should be carefully formed in early life, and then the mere force of custom would teach these ill bred women 'to assume the virtue if they have it not.'"

The family at the Grove, was with us an inexhaustible topic whenever we met. I observed to Sir John, "that I had sometimes observed in charitable families, a display, a bustle, a kind of animal restlessness, a sort of mechanical *besoin* to be cha-

ritably busy. That though they fulfilled conscientiously one part of the apostolic injunction, that of "giving," yet they failed in the other clause, that of doing it "with simplicity." "Yes," replied he, "I visit a charitable lady in town, who almost puts me out of love with benevolence. Her own bounties form the entire subject of her conversation. As soon as the breakfast is removed, the table is always regularly covered with plans, and proposals, and subscription papers. This display conveniently performs the three-fold office of publishing her own charities, furnishing subjects of altercation, and raising contributions on the visitor. Her narratives really cost me more than my subscription. She is so full of debate, and detail, and opposition; she makes you read so many papers of her own drawing up, and so many answers to the schemes of other people, and she has so many objections to every other person's mode of doing good, and so many arguments to prove that her own is the best, that she appears less like a benevolent lady than a chicaning attorney."

"Nothing," said I, "corrects this bustling bounty so completely, as when it is mixed up with religion, I should rather say, as when it flows from religion. This motive, so far from diminishing the energy, augments it; but it cures this display, and converts the irritation into a principle. It transfers the activity from the tongue, to the heart. It is the only sort of charity which 'blesses twice.' All charity, indeed, blesses the receiver; but the blessing promised to the giver, I have sometimes trembled to think, may be forfeited even by a generous mind, from ostentation and parade in the manner, and want of purity in the motive."

"In Stanley's family," replied he in a more serious tone, "I have met with a complete refutation of that favourite maxim of the world, that religion is a dull thing itself, and makes its professors gloomy and morose. Charles! I have often frequented houses where pleasure was the avowed object of idolatry. But to see the votaries of the 'reeling goddess,' after successive nights passed in her temples! to see the languor, the listlessness, the discontent—you would rather have taken them for her victims than her worshippers. So little mental vivacity, so little gaiety of heart! In short, after no careless observation, I am compelled to declare, that I never saw two forms less alike than those of pleasure and happiness."

"Your testimony, Sir John," said I, "is of great weight in a case of which you are so experienced a judge. What a different scene do we now contemplate! Mr. Stanley seems to have diffused his own spirit through the whole family. What makes his example of such efficacy is, that he considers the Christian *temper* as so considerable a part of christianity. This temper seems to imbue his whole soul, pervade his whole conduct, and influence his whole conversation. I see every day some fresh occasion to admire his candour, his humility, his constant reference, not as a topic of discourse, but as a principle of conduct, to the gospel, as the standard by which actions are to be weighed. His conscientious strictness of speech, his serious reproof of calumnies, his charitable construction of every case which has two sides; 'his simplicity and godly sincerity;' his rule of referring all events to providential direction, and his invariable habit

of vindicating the Divine goodness under dispensations, apparently the most unfavourable."

Here Sir John left me, and I could not forbear pursuing the subject in soliloquy as I proceeded in my walk.—I reflected with admiration that Mr. Stanley, in his religious conversation, rendered himself so useful, because instead of the uniform nostrum of *the drop and the pill*, he applied a different class of arguments as the case required, to objectors to the different parts of christianity; to ill informed persons who adopted a partial gospel without understanding it as a scheme, or embracing it as a whole.—To those who allow its truth merely on the same ground of evidence that establishes the truth of any other well authenticated history; and who, satisfied with this external evidence, not only do not feel its power on their own heart, but deny that it has any such influence on the hearts of others;—to those who believe the gospel to be a mere code of ethics;—to their antipodes who assert that Christ has lowered the requisitions of the law;—to Lady Belfield who rests on her charities,—Sir John on his correctness;---Lady Aston on her austerities;---to this man who values himself solely on the stoutness of his orthodoxy; to another on the firmness of his integrity; to a third on the peculiarities of his party, he addresses himself with a particular view to their individual errors. This he does with such a discriminating application to the case, as might lead the ill informed to suspect that he was not equally earnest in those other paints, which not being attacked, he does not feel himself called on to defend, but which, had they been attacked, he

would then have defended with equal zeal as relative to the discussion. To crown all, I contemplated that affectionate warmth of heart, that sympathizing kindness, that tenderness of feeling, of which the gay and the thoughtless fancy that they themselves possess the monopoly, while they make over harshness, austerity, and want of charity to religious men, as their inseparable characteristics.

These qualities excite in my heart a feeling compounded of veneration, and of love. And Oh! how impossible it is, even in religion itself, to be disinterested! All these excellencies I contemplate with a more heartfelt delight, from the presumptuous hope that I may one day have the felicity of connecting myself still more intimately with them.

CHAP. XXIII.

SOME days after while we were conversing over our tea, we heard the noise of a carriage; and Mr. Stanley looking out from a bow window in which he and I were sitting, said, it was Lady and Miss Rattle driving up the avenue. He had just time too add, "these are our *fine* neighbours. They always make us a visit as soon as they come down, while all the gloss and lustre of London is fresh upon them. We have always our regular routine of conversation. While her Ladyship is pouring the fashions into Mrs. Stanley's ear, Miss Rattle, who is about Phœbe's age, entertains my daughters and me with the history of her own talents and acquirements."

Here they entered. After a few compliments, Lady Rattle seated herself between Lady Belfield and Mrs. Stanley at the upper end of the room; while the fine, sprightly, boisterous girl of fifteen or sixteen threw herself back on the sofa at nearly her full length, between Mr. Stanley and me, the Miss Stanleys and Sir John sitting near us, within hearing of her lively loquacity.

"Well, Miss Amelia," said Mr. Stanley, "I dare say you have made good use of your time this winter; I suppose you have ere now completed the whole circle of the arts. Now let me hear what you have been doing, and tell me your whole achievments, as frankly as you used to do when you were a little girl." "Indeed," replied she, "I have not been idle, if I must speak the truth. One

has so many things to learn, you know. I have gone on with my French and Italian of course, and I am beginning German. Then comes my drawing master; he teaches me to paint flowers and shells, and to draw ruins and buildings, and to take views. He is a good soul, and is finishing a set of pictures, and half a dozen fire screens which I began for mamma. He *does* help me to be sure, but indeed, I do some of it myself, don't I, mamma?" calling out to her mother, who was too much absorded in her own narratives to attend to her daughter.

"And then," pursued the young prattler, "I learn varnishing, and gilding, and japanning. And next winter I shall learn modelling, and etching, and engraving in mezzotinto and acquatinta, for Lady Di. Dash learns etching, and mamma says as I shall have a better fortune than Lady Di, she vows I shall learn every thing she does. Then I have a dancing master, who teaches me the Scotch and Irish steps; and another who teaches me attitudes, and I shall soon learn the waltz, and I can stand longer on one leg already than Lady Di. Then I have a singing master, and another who teaches me the harp, and another for the pianoforte. And what little time I can spare from these *principal* things, I give by odd minutes to ancient and modern history, and geography, and astronomy, and grammar, and botany. Then I attend lectures on chemistry, and experimental philosophy. for as I am not yet come out, I have not much to do in the evenings; and mamma says, there is nothing in the world that money can pay for, but what I shall learn. And I run so delightfully fast

from one thing to another that I am never tired. What makes it so pleasant is, as soon as I am fairly set in with one master, another arrives. I should hate to be long at the same thing. But I shan't have a great while to work so hard, for as soon as I come out, I shall give it all up, except music and dancing."

All this time Lucilla sat listening with a smile, behind the complacency of which she tried to conceal her astonishment. Phœbe, who had less self-control, was on the very verge of a broad laugh. Sir John, who had long lived in a soil where this species is indigenous, had been too long accustomed to all its varieties, to feel much astonishment at this specimen, which, however, he sat contemplating with philosophical, but discriminating coolness.

For my own part, my mind was wholly absorbed in contrasting the coarse manners of this voluble, and intrepid, but good humoured girl, with the quiet, cheerful, and unassuming elegance of Lucilla.

"I should be afraid, Miss Rattle," said Mr. Stanley, "if you did not look in such blooming health, that, with all these incessant labours, you did not allow yourself time for rest. Surely you never sleep?"

"O yes, that I do, and eat too," said she; "my life is not quite so hard and moping as you fancy. What between shopping and morning visitings with mamma, and seeing sights, and the park, and the gardens, (which, by the way, I hate, except on a Sunday when they are crowded,) and our young balls, which are four or five in a week after Easter,

and mamma's music parties at home, I contrive to enjoy myself tolerably, though after I have been presented, I shall be a thousand times better off, for then I shan't have a moment to myself. "Won't that be delightful," said she, twitching my arm, rather roughly, by way of recalling my attention, which however had seldom wandered?

As she had now run out her London materials, the news of the neighbourhood next furnished a subject of her volubility. After she had mentioned in detail one or two stories of low village gossip; while I was wondering how she could come at them, she struck me dumb by quoting the coachman as her authority. This enigma was soon explained. The mother and daughter having exhausted their different topics of discourse nearly at the same time, they took their leave, in order to enrich every family in the neighbourhood, on whom they were going to call, with the same valuable knowledge which they had imparted to us.

Mr. Stanley conducted Lady Rattle, and I led her daughter; but as I offered to hand her into the carriage, she started back with a sprightly motion, and screamed out, "O no, not in the inside, pray help me up to the *Dickey*, I always protest I never will ride with any body but the Coachman, if we go ever so far." So saying, with a spring which shewed how much she despised my assistance, the little hoyden was seated in a moment, nodding familiarly at me, as if I had been an old friend.

Then with a voice, emulating that which, when passing by Charing-Cross, I have heard issue from an over-stuffed stage vehicle, when a robust sailor

has thrust his body out at the window, the fair creature vociferated "drive on, Coachman!" He obeyed, and turning round her whole person, she continued nodding at me till they were out of sight.

"Here is a mass of accomplishments," said I, without one particle of mind, one ray of common sense, or one shade of delicacy! Surely somewhat less time, and less money might have sufficed to qualify a companion for the Coachman!"

"What poor creatures are we men," said I to Mr. Stanley as soon as he came in! "We think it very well, if after much labour and long application we can attain to one or two of the innumerable acquirements of this gay little girl. Nor is this I find the rare achievment of one happy genius—There is a whole class of these miraculous females. Miss Rattle

Is knight o' th' shire, and represents them all."

"It is only young ladies," replied he, "whose vast abilities, whose mighty grasp of mind, can take in every thing. Among men, learned men, talents are commonly directed into some one channel, and fortunate is he, who in that one attains to excellence. The linguist is rarely a painter, nor is the mathematician often a poet. Even in one profession, there are divisions and subdivisions. The same Lawyer never thinks of presiding both in the King's Bench, and in the Court of Chancery. The science of healing is not only divided into its three distinct branches, but in the profession of Surgery only, how many are the subdivisions! One professor undertakes the eye, another the ear, and a third the teeth. But woman, ambitious, as-

piring, universal, triumphant, glorious woman, even at the age of a school-boy, encounters the whole range of arts, attacks the whole circle of sciences!

"A mighty maze, and quite without a plan," replied Sir John, laughing. "But the truth is, the misfortune does not so much consist in their learning every thing, as in their knowing nothing; I mean nothing well. When gold is beaten out so wide, the lamina must needs be very thin. And you may observe, the more valuable attainments, though they are not to be left out of the modish plan, are kept in the back ground; and are to be picked up out of the odd remnants of that time, the sum of which is devoted to frivolous accomplishments. All this gay confusion of acquirements, these holiday splendors, this superfluity of enterprize, enumerated in the first part of her catalogue is the *real business* of education, the latter part is incidental, and if taught is not learnt.

"As to the lectures so boastfully mentioned, they may be doubtless made very useful subsidiaries to instruction. They most happily illustrate book-knowledge; but if the pupil's instructions in private do not precede, and keep pace, with these useful public exhibitions, her knowledge will be only presumptuous ignorance. She may learn to talk of oxygen and hydrogen, and deflagration, and trituration, but she will know nothing of the science except the terms. It is not knowing the name of his tools that makes an artist; and I should be afraid of the vanity which such superficial information would communicate to a mind, not previously prepared, nor exercised at home in corres-

ponding studies. But as Miss Rattle honestly confessed, as soon as she *comes out* all these things will die away of themselves, and dancing and music will be almost all which will survive of her multifarious pursuits."

"I look upon the great predominance of music in female education," said Mr. Stanley, "to be the source of more mischief than is suspected; not from any evil in the thing itself, but from its being such a gulph of time, as really to leave little room for solid acquisitions. I love music, and were it only cultivated as an amusement should commend it. But the monstrous proportion, or rather disproportion of life which it swallows up, even in many religious families, and this is the chief subject of my regret, has converted an innocent diversion into a positive sin. I question if many gay men devote more hours in a day to idle purposes, than the daughters of many pious parents spend in this amusement. All these hours the mind lies fallow, improvement is at a stand, if even it does not retrograde. Nor is it the shreds and scraps of time, stolen in the intervals of better things, that is so devoted; but it is the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous the spirits light, the intellect awake and fresh, and the whole being wound up by the refreshment of sleep, and animated by the return of light and life, for nobler services."

"If," said Sir John, "music were cultivated to embellish retirement, to be practised where pleasures are scarce, and good performers are not to be had, it would quite alter the case. But the truth is, these highly taught ladies are not only

living in public where they constantly hear the most exquisite professors, but they have them also at their own houses. Now one of these two things must happen. Either the performance of the lady will be so inferior as not to be worth hearing on the comparison, or so good that she will fancy herself the rival, instead of the admirer of the performer, whom she had better pay and praise than fruitlessly emulate."

"This anxious struggle to reach the unattainable excellence of the professor," said Mr. Stanley, often brings to my mind the contest for victory between the ambitious nightingale and the angry lutanist in the beautiful Prolusion of Strada."

"It is to the predominance of this talent," replied I, "that I ascribe that want of companionableness of which I complain. The excellence of musical performance is a decorated screen, behind which all defects in domestic knowledge, in taste, judgment and literature, and the talents which make an elegant companion, are creditably concealed."

"I have made," said Sir John, "another remark. Young ladies, who from apparent shyness do not join in the conversation of a small select party, are always ready enough to entertain them with music on the slightest hint. Surely it is equally modest to *say* as to *sing*, especially to sing those melting strains we sometimes hear sung, and which we should be ashamed to hear said. After all, how few hours are there in a week, in which a man engaged in the pursuits of life, and a woman in the duties of a family, wish to employ in music. I am fond of it myself, and Lady Belfield plays admira-

bly; but with the cares inseparable from the conscientious discharge of her duty with so many children, how little time has she to play, or I to listen! But there is no day, no hour, no meal in which I do not enjoy in her the ever ready pleasure of an elegant and interresting companion. A man of sense, when all goes smoothly, wants to be entertained; under vexation to be soothed; in difficulties to be counselled; in sorrow to be comforted. In a mere artist can he reasonably look for these resources?

"Only figure to yourself," replied Mr. Stanley, my six girls daily playing their four hours a-piece, which is now a moderate allowance! As we have but one instrument they must be at it in succession, day and night, to keep pace with their neighbours. If I may compare light things with serious ones, it would resemble," added he, smiling, "the perpetual psalmody of good Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, who had relays of musicians every six hours to sing the whole Psalter through every day and night! I mean not to ridicule that holy man; but my girls thus keeping their useless vigils in turn, we should only have the melody without any of the piety. No, my friend! I will have but two or three singing birds to cheer my little grove. If all the world are performers, there will soon be no hearers. Now, as I am resolved in my own family that some shall listen, I will have but few to perform."

"It must be confessed," said Sir John, "that Miss Rattle is no servile imitator of the vapid tribe of the superficially accomplished. Her violent animal spirits prevent her from growing smooth by attrition. She is as rough and angular as rustici-

ty itself could have made her. Where strength of character, however, is only marked by the worst concomitant of strength, which is coarseness, I should almost prefer inanity itself."

"I should a little fear," said I, "that I lay too much stress on companionableness; on the *positive duty of being agreeable at home*, had I not early learnt the doctrine from my father, and seen it exemplified so happily in the practice of my mother."

"I entirely agree with you, Charles," said Mr. Stanley, "as to the absolute *morality* of being agreeable and even entertaining in one's own family circle. Nothing so soon, and so certainly wears out the happiness of married persons, as that too common bad effect of familiarity, the sinking down into dullness and insipidity; neglecting to keep alive the flame by the delicacy which first kindled it; want of vigilance in keeping the temper cheerful by Christian discipline, and the faculties bright by constant use. Mutual affection decays of itself, even where there is no great moral turpitude, without mutual endeavours, not only to improve but to amuse.

"This," continued he, "is one of the great arts of *home enjoyment*. That it is so little practised, accounts in a good measure for the undomestic turn of too many married persons. The man meets abroad with amusement, and the woman with attentions, to which they are not accustomed at home. Whereas a capacity to please on the one part, and a disposition to be pleased on the other, in their own house, would make most visits appear dull. But then the disposition and the capacity must be cultivated antecedently to marriage.

A woman, whose whole education has been rehearsal, will always be dull, except she lives on the stage, constantly displaying what she has been sedulously acquiring. Books on the contrary, well chosen books, do not lead to exhibition. The knowledge a woman acquires in private, desires no witnesses; the possession is the pleasure. It improves herself, it embellishes her family society, it entertains her husband, it informs her children. The gratification is cheap, is safe, is always to be had at home."

"It is superfluous," said Sir John, "to decorate women so highly for early youth; youth is itself a decoration. We mistakingly adorn most, that part of life which least requires it, and neglect to provide for that which will want it most. It is for that sober period when life has lost its freshness, the passions there intenseness, and the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing. Our wisdom would be to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a store of notions, ideas, principles and habits, which may preserve, or transfer to the mind that affection, which was at first partly attracted by the person. But to add a vacant mind to a form which has ceased to please; to provide no subsidiary aid to beauty while it lasts, and espepecially no substitute when it is departed, is to render life comfortless, and marriage dreary."

"The reading of a cultivated woman," said Mr. Stanley, "commonly occupies less time than the music of a musical woman, or the idleness of an indolent woman, or the dress of a vain woman, or the dissipation of a fluttering woman; she is therefore likely to have more leisure for her duties, as

science a great deal of practical labour. To believe, and remember, and act upon, common, undisputed, general truths, is the most important part of religion. This, though in fact very difficult, is overlooked, on account of its being supposed very easy. To keep up in the heart a lively impression of a few plain momentous truths, is of more use than the ablest discussion of a hundred controverted points.

"Now tell me, Phœbe, do you really think that you have remembered and practised all the instructions that you have received from Dr. Barlow's sermons last year? If you have, though you will have a better right to be critical, you will be less disposed to be so. If you have not, do not complain that the sermon is not new, till you have made all possible use of the old ones; which if you had done, you would have acquired so much humility, that you would meekly listen even to what you already know. But however the discourse may have been superfluous to such deep divines as Miss Phœbe Stanley, it will be very useful to me, and to other hearers who are not so wise."

Poor Phœbe blushed up to her ears; tears rushed into her eyes. She was so overcome with shame that, regardless of the company, she flew into her father's arms, and softly whispered that if he would forgive her foolish vanity, she would never again be above being taught. The fond, but not blind father, withdrew with her. Lucilla followed, with looks of anxious love.

During their short absence, Mrs. Stanley said, "Lucilla is so practically aware of the truth of her father's observation, that she often says she finds

as much advantage as pleasure in teaching the children at her school. This elementary instruction obliges her continually to recur to first principles, and to keep constantly uppermost in her mind those great truths contained in the articles of our belief, the commandments, and the prayer taught by our Redeemer. This perpetual simplifying of religion she assures me, keeps her more humble, fixes her attention on fundamental truths, and make her more indifferent to controverted points."

In a few minutes Mr. Stanley and his daughters returned cheerful and happy: Lucilla smiling like the angel of peace and love.

"If I were not afraid," said Lady Belfield, "of falling under the same censure with my friend Phœbe," smiling on the sweet girl, "I should venture to say, that I thought the sermon rather too severe."

"Do not be afraid, Madam," replied Mr. Stanley; "though I disapprove that cheap and cruel criticism which makes a man *an offender for a word*, yet discussion does not necessarily involve censoriousness; so far from it, it is fair to discuss whatever seems to be doubtful, and I shall be glad to hear your Ladyship's objections."

Well then," replied she, in the most modest tone and accent, "with all my reverence for Dr. Barlow, I thought him a little unreasonable in seeming to expect universal goodness from creatures whom he yet insisted were fallen creatures."

"Perhaps Madam," said Mr. Stanley, "you mistook his meaning, for he appeared to me perfectly consistent, not only with himself, but with

his invariable rule and guide, the scriptures. Sanctification, will you allow me to use so serious a word, however imperfect, must be universal. It is not the improvement of any one faculty, or quality, or temper, which divines mean, when they say we are renewed in part, so much as that the charge is not perfect, the holiness is not complete in *any* part, or power, or faculty, though progressive in all. He who earnestly desires an universal victory over sin, knows which of his evil dispositions or affections it is that is yet unsubdued. This rebellious enemy he vigilantly sets himself to watch against, to struggle with, and, through divine grace, to conquer. The test of his sincerity does not so much consist in avoiding many faults to which he has no temptation, as in conquering that one to which his natural bent and bias forcibly impel him."

Lady Belfield said, "But is it not impossible to bring every part of our nature under this absolute dominion? Suppose a man is very passionate, and yet very charitable; would you look upon that person to be in a dangerous state?"

"It is not my province, Madam, to decide," replied Mr. Stanley, 'God,' as Bishop Sanderson says, 'reserves this *royalty* to himself of being the searcher of hearts.' I cannot judge how far he resists anger, nor what are his secret struggles against it. God, who expects not perfection, expects sincerity. Though complete, unmixed goodness is not to be attained in this imperfect state, yet the earnest desire after it is the only sure criterion of the sincerity we profess. If the man you allude to does not watch and pray, and strive against

the passion of anger, which is his natural infirmity, I should doubt whether any of his affections were really renewed; and I should fear that his charity was rather a mere habitual feeling, though a most amiable one, than a Christian grace. He indulges in charity, because it is a constitutional bias, and costs him nothing. He indulges in passion, because it is a natural bias also; and to set about a victory over it would cost him a great deal. This should put him on a strict self-examination; when he would probably find that, while he gives the uncontrouled reins to any one wrong inclination, his religion, even when he does right things, is questionable. True religion is seated in the heart; that is the centre from which all the lines of right practice must diverge. It is the great duty and chief business of a Christian to labour to make all his affections, with all their motives, tendencies, and operations, subservient to the word and will of God. His irregular passions, which are still apt to start out into disorder, will require vigilance to the end. He must not think all is safe, because the more tractable ones are not rebellious; but he may entertain a cheerful hope, when those which were once rebellious are become tractable."

"I feel the importance of what you say," returned Lady Belfield; but I feel also my utter inability to set about it."

"My dear Madam," said Mr. Stanley, "this is the best and most salutary feeling you can have. That very consciousness of insufficiency will, I trust, drive you to the fountain of all strength and power: it will quicken your faith, and animate your prayer; faith, which is the habitual principle

of confidence in God; and prayer, which is the exercise of that principle toward Him who is the object of it."

"But Dr. Barlow," said Lady Belfield, "was so discouraging! He seemed to intimate, as if the conflict of a christian with sin must be as lasting as his life; whereas I had hoped that victory once obtained, was obtained for ever."

"The *strait gate*." replied Mr. Stanley, "is only the entrance of religion; the *narrow way* is a continued course. The Christian life, my dear Lady Belfield, is not a point but a progress. It is precisely in the race of Christianity as in the race of human glory. Julius Cæsar and St. Paul describe their respective warfares in nearly the same terms.—*We should count nothing done while any thing remains undone**, says the Warrior.—*Not counting myself to have attained—forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing forward to those which are before*, says the Apostle. And it is worth remarking, that they both made the disqualifying observation after attainments almost incredible. As there was no being a hero by any idler way, so there is no being a Christian by any easier road. The necessity of pursuit is the same in both cases, though the objects pursued differ as widely as the vanities of time from the riches of eternity.

"Do not think, my dear Madam," added Mr. Stanley, "that I am erecting myself into a censor, much less into a model. The corruptions which I lament, I participate. The deficiencies which I

* Nil actum reputans dum quod superesset agendum. LUCAN.

deplore, I feel. Not only when I look abroad, am I persuaded of the general prevalence of evil by what I see; but when I look into my own heart, my conviction is confirmed by what I experience. I am conscious, not merely of frailties, but of sins. I will not hypocritically accuse myself of gross offences which I have no temptation to commit, and from the commission of which, motives inferior to religion would preserve me. But I am continually humbled in detecting mixed motives in almost all I do.—Such strugglings of pride with my endeavours after humility! Such irresolution in my firmest purposes! So much imperfection in my best actions! So much want of simplicity in my purest designs! Such fresh shoots of selfishness where I had hoped the plant itself had been eradicated! Such frequent deadness in duty! Such coldness in my affections! Such infirmity of will! Such proneness to earth in my highest aspirations after heaven! All these you see would hardly make, in the eyes of those who want Christian discernment, very gross sins, yet they prove demonstrably the root of sin in the heart, and the infection of nature tainting my best resolves."

"The true Christian," said I, when Mr. Stanley had done speaking, "extracts humility from the very circumstance which raises pride in the irreligious. The sight of any enormity in another makes the mere moralist proud that he is exempt from it, while the religious man is humbled from a view of the sinfulness of that nature he partakes, a nature which admits of such excesses, and from which excesses he knows that he himself is preserved by divine grace alone. I have often observ-

ed that comparison is the aliment of pride in the worldly man, and of self-abasement in the Christian."

Poor Lady Belfield looked comforted on finding that her friend Mr. Stanley was not quite so perfect as she had feared. "Happy are those," exclaimed she, looking at Lucilla, "the innocence of whose lives recommends them to the divine favour."

"Innocence," replied Mr. Stanley, "can never be pleaded as a ground of acceptance, because the thing does not exist. Innocence excludes the necessity of repentance, and where there is no sin, there can be no need of a Saviour. Whatever therefore we may be in comparison with others, innocence can afford no plea for our acceptance, without annulling the great plan of our redemption."

"One thing puzzles me said Lady Belfield. "The most worthless people I converse with deny the doctrine of human corruption, a doctrine the truth of which one should suppose their own feelings must confirm; while those few excellent persons, who almost seem to have escaped it, insist the most peremptorily on its reality. But if it be really true, surely the mercies of God are so great, that he will overlook the frailties of such weak and erring mortals. So gracious a Saviour will not exact such rigorous obedience from creatures so infirm."

"Let not what I am going to say, my dear Lady Belfield," replied Mr. Stanley, "offend you; the correctness of your conduct exempts you from any particular application. But there are too ma-

ny Christians, who while they speak with reverence of Christ as the Saviour of sinners, do not enough consider him as a deliverer from sin. They regard him rather as having lowered the requisitions of the law, and exonerated his followers from the necessity of that strictness of life which they view as a burthensome part of religion. From this burthen they flatter themselves it was the chief object of the Gospel to deliver them; and from this supposed deliverance it is, that they chiefly consider it as a merciful dispensation. A cheap Christianity, of which we can acquit ourselves by a general recognition, and a few stated observances; which requires no sacrifices of the will, nor rectification of the life, is I assure you, the prevailing system; the religion of that numerous class who like to save appearances, and to decline realities; who expect every thing hereafter while they resolve to give up nothing here; but who keep heaven in view as a snug reversion after they shall have squeezed out of this world, to the very last dregs and droppings, all it has to give."

Lady Belfield with great modesty replied, "Indeed I am ashamed to have said so much upon a topic on which I am unable and unused to debate. Sir John only smiles, and looks resolved not to help me out. Believe me however, my dear Sir, that what I have said proceeds not from presumption, but from an earnest desire of being set right. I will only venture to offer one more observation on the afternoon's sermon. Dr. Barlow, to my great surprize, spoke of the death of Christ as exhibiting *practical* lessons. Now though I have always considered it in a general way, as the cause

of our salvation, yet its preceptive and moral benefits, I must confess, do not appear to me at all obvious."

"I conceive," replied Mr. Stanley, "our deliverance from the punishment incurred by sin, to be one great end and object of the death of our Redeemer; but I am very far from considering this as the only benefit attending it. I conceive it to be most abundant in instruction, and the strongest possible incentive to practical goodness, and that in a great variety of ways. The death of our Redeemer shows us the infinite value of our souls, by showing the inestimable price paid for them, and thus leads us to more diligence in securing their eternal felicity. It is calculated to inspire us with an unfeigned hatred of sin, and more especially to convince us of God's hatred to that, for the pardon of which such a sacrifice was deemed necessary.

Now if it actually produce such an effect, it consequently stimulates us to repentance, and to an increasing dread of violating those engagements which we have so often made, to lead a better life. Then the contemplation of this stupenduous circumstance will tend to fill our hearts with such a sense of gratitude and obedience, as will be likely to preserve us from relapsing into fresh offences. Again—can any motive operate so powerfully on us towards producing universal charity and forgiveness? Whatever promotes our love to God will dispose us to an increased love for our fellow-creatures. We cannot converse with any man, we cannot receive a kindness from any man, nay, we cannot receive an injury from any man, for whom the Redeemer has not died. The remem-

brance of the sufferings which procured pardon for the greatest offences, has a natural tendency to lead us to forgive small ones."

Lady Belfield said, "I had not indeed imagined there were any practical uses in an event to which I had been, however, accustomed to look with reverence as an atonement for sin."

"Of these practical effects," replied Mr. Stanley, "I will only farther observe, that all human considerations put together cannot so powerfully inspire us with an indifference to the vanities of life, and the allurements of unhallowed pleasures. No human motive can be so efficacious in sustaining the heart under trials, and reconciling it to afflictions. For what trials and afflictions do not sink into nothing in comparison with the sufferings attending that august event, from which we derive this support. The contemplation of this sacrifice also degrades wealth, debases power, annihilates ambition. We rise from this contemplation with a mind prepared to bear with the infirmities, to relieve the wants, to forgive the unkindnesses of men. We extract from it a more humbling sense of ourselves, a more subdued spirit, a more sober contempt of whatever the world calls great, than all the lectures of ancient philosophy, or the teachers of modern morals ever inspired."

During this little debate Sir John maintained the most invincible silence. His countenance bore not the least mark of ill humour or impatience, but it was serious and thoughtful; except when his wife got into any little difficulty; he then encouraged her by an affectionate smile, but listened like a man who has not quite made up his mind,

yet thinks the subject too important to be dismissed without a fair and candid hearing.

CHAP. XXV.

WHILE we were at breakfast next morning, a sweet little gay girl flew into the room almost breathless with joy; and running to her mother, presented her with a beautiful nosegay.

"O, I see you were the industrious girl last week, Kate," said Mrs. Stanley, embracing her, admiring the flowers. Lady Belfield looked inquisitively. "It is an invention of Lucilla's," said the mother, "that the little one who performs best in the school-room, instead of having any reward which may excite vanity or sensuality, shall be taught to gratify a better feeling, by being allowed to present her mother with a nosegay of the finest flowers, which it is reward enough to see worn at dinner, to which she is always admitted when there is no company."

"Oh pray do not consider us as company; pray let Kate dine with us to-day," said Lady Belfield; Mrs. Stanley bowed her assent and went on. "But this is not all. The flowers they present, they also raise. I went rather too far, when I said that no vanity was excited; they are vain enough of their carnations, and each is eager to produce the largest.

In this competition, however, the vanity is not personal. Lucilla has some skill in raising flowers, each girl has a subordinate post under her. Their father often treats them with half a day's work, and then they all treat me with tea and cakes in the honey-suckle arbour of their own planting, which is called Lucilla's bower. It would be hard to say whether parents or children most enjoy these happy holidays."

At dinner Mrs. Stanley appeared with her nosegay in a large knot of ribbons, which was eyed with no small complacency by little Kate. I observed that Lucilla, who used to manifest much pleasure in the conversation after dinner, was beckoned out of the room by Phœbe, as soon as it was over. I felt uneasy at an absence, to which I had not been accustomed; but the cause was explained, when at six o'clock, Kate, who was the queen of the day, was sent to invite us to drink tea in Lucilla's bower, we instantly obeyed the summons.

"I knew nothing of this," said the delighted mother, while we were all admiring the elegant arrangements of this little fete. The purple clematis twisting its flexile branches with those of the pale woodbine, formed a sweet and fragrant canopy to the arched bower, while the flowery tendrils hung down on all sides. Large bunches of roses, intermixed with the silver stars of the jessamine, were stuck into the moss on the inside as a temporary decoration only. The finest plants had been brought from the Green-house for the occasion. It was a delicious evening, and the little fairy festivity, together with the flitting about of the airy spirits which had prepared it, was absolutely en-

chanting. Sir John, always poetical, exclaimed in rapture,

"Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only."

I needed not this quotation to bring the garden of Eden to my mind, for Lucilla presided. Phœbe was all alive. The other little ones had decorated Kate's flaxen hair with a wreath of woodbines. They sung two or three baby stanzas, which they had composed among themselves, in which Kate was complimented as queen of the fete. The youngest daughter of Lady Aston, who was about Kate's age, and two little girls of Dr. Barlow's, were of the children's party on the green. The elder sisters of both families made part of the company within.

When we were all seated in our enchanting bower, and drinking our tea, at which we had no other attendants than the little Hebes themselve, I asked Kate how it happened, that she seemed to be distinguished on this occasion from her little sisters. "Oh Sir," said she, "it is because it is my birth day. I am eight years old to-day. I gave up all my gilt books, with pictures, this day twelve-month, and to-day I give up all my little story books, and I am now going to read such books as men and women read."

She then ran to her companions who ranged themselves round a turf seat at a little distance before us, to which were transferred a profusion of cakes and fruit from the bower. While they were devouring them, I turned to Mr. Stanley and desired an explanation of Kate's speech.

"I make," said he, "the renouncing their baby books a kind of epocha, and by thus distinctly marking the period, they never think of returning back to them. We have in our domestic plan, several of these artificial divisions of life. These little celebrations are æras, that we use as marking posts, from which we set out on some new course."

"But as to Kate's books," said Lady Belfield?" "We have," replied Mr. Stanley, "too many elementary books. They are read too much and too long. The youthful mind, which was formerly sick from inanition is now in danger from a plethora.

"Much however will depend on capacity and disposition. A child of slower parts may be indulged till nine years old with books which a lively genius will look down upon at seven. A girl of talents *will* read. To *her* no excitement is wanting. The natural appetite is a sufficient incentive. The less brilliant child requires the allurement of lighter books. She wants encouragement as much as the other requires restraint."

"But don't you think," said Lady Belfield, "that they are of great use in attracting children to love reading?" "Doubtless they are," said Mr. Stanley. "The misfortune is, that the stimulants used to attract at first, must be not only continued but heightened, to keep up the attraction. These books are novels in miniature, and the excess of them will lead to the want of novels at full length. The early use of savoury dishes is not usually followed by an appetite for plain food. To the taste thus pampered, history becomes dry, grammar laborious, and religion dull.

"My wife who was left to travel through the

wide expanse of Universal history, and the dreary deserts of Rapin and Mezerai, is, I will venture to assert, more competently skilled in ancient French, and English history, than any of the girls who have been fed, or rather starved on extracts and abridgements. I mean not to recommend the two last named authors for very young people. They are dry and tedious, and children in our days have opportunities of acquiring the same knowledge with less labour. We have brighter, I wish I could say safer lights. Still fact, and not wit, is the leading object of history.

"Mrs. Stanley says, that the very tediousness of her historians had a good effect; they were a ballast to her levity, a discipline to her mind, of which she has felt the benefit in her subsequent life.

"But to return to the mass of children's books. The too great profusion of them protracts the imbecility of childhood. They arrest the understanding instead of advancing it. They give forwardness without strength. They hinder the mind from making vigorous shoots, teach it to stoop when it should soar, and to contract when it should expand. Yet I allow that many of them are delightfully amusing, and to a certain degree instructive. But they must not be used as the basis of instruction, and but sparingly used at all as refreshment from labour."

"They inculcate morality and good actions surely," said Lady Belfield. "It is true," replied Mr. Stanley, "but they often inculcate them on a worldly principle, and rather teach the pride of virtue, and the profit of virtue, than point out the motive of virtue, and the principle of sin. They

reprobate bad actions as evil and injurious to others, but not as an offence against the Almighty.—Whereas the Bible comes with a plain, strait-forward, simple, but powerful principle—'How shall I do this great wickedness against GOD?' Against THEE, THEE only have I sinned, and done this evil in THY sight.

"Even children should be taught that when a man has committed the greatest possible crime against his fellow-creature, still the offence against God is what will strike a true penitent with the most deep remorse. All morality which is not drawn from this scriptural source is weak, defective, and hollow. These entertaining authors seldom ground their stories on any intimation that human nature is corrupt; that the young reader is helpless and wants assistance; that he is guilty and wants pardon."

"Surely, my dear Mr. Stanley," said Lady Belfield, "though I do not object to the truth and reasonableness of any thing you have said, I cannot think that these things can possibly be made intelligible to children."

"The framers of our catechism, Madam, thought otherwise," replied Mr. Stanley. "The catechism was written for children, and contains all the seeds and principles of christianity for men. It evidently requires much explanation, much developement; still it furnishes a wide and important field for colloquial instruction, without which young persons can by no means understand a composition so admirable, but so condensed. The catechism speaks expressly of 'a death unto sin'—of 'a new birth unto righteousness'—of 'being born in sin'—

of being 'the children of wrath'—of becoming 'the children of grace---of 'forsaking sin by repentance ---of 'believing the promises of God by faith.' Now while children are studying these great truths in the catechism, they are probably, at the same time, almost constantly reading some of those entertaining stories which are grounded and built on a quite opposite principle, and do not even imply the existence of any such fundamental truths."

"Surely," interrupted Lady Belfield, "you would not have these serious doctrines brought forward in story books?"

"By no means, Madam," replied Mr. Stanley; "but I will venture to assert that even story books should not be founded on a principle directly *contradictory* to them, nay totally *subversive* of them. The Arabian Nights, and other oriental books of fable, though loose and faulty in many respects, yet have always a reference to the religion of the country. Nothing is introduced against the law of Mahomet; nothing subversive of the opinions of a Mussulman. I do not quarrel with books for having *no* religion, but for having a *false* religion. A book which in nothing opposes the principle of the Bible I would be far from calling a bad book, though the bible was never named in it."

Lady Belfield observed, "That she was sorry to say her children found religious studies very dry and tiresome; though she took great pains, and made them learn by heart a multitude of questions and answers, a variety of catechisms and explanations, and the best abridgements of the Bible."

"My dear Lady Belfield," replied Mr. Stanley, "you have fully accounted for the dryness and

dulness of which you complain. Give them the *Bible itself.* I never yet knew a child who did not delight in the Bible histories, and who would not desire to hear them again and again. From the histories, Mrs. Stanley and I proceed with them to the parables; and from them to the miracles, and a few of the most striking prophecies. When they have acquired a good deal of this desultory knowledge, we begin to weave the parts into a whole. The little girl who had the honour of dining with you to-day, has begun this morning to read the scriptures with her mother systematically. We shall soon open to her something of the *scheme* of Christianity, and explain how those miracles and prophecies confirm the truth of that religion in which she is to be more fully instructed.

"Upon their historical knowledge which they acquire by picking out the most interesting stories, we endeavour to ground principles to enlighten their minds, and precepts to influence their conduct. With the genuine language of scripture I have taken particular care they shall be well acquainted, by digging for the ore in its native bed. While they have been studying the stories, their minds have at the same time been imbued with the impressive phraseology of scripture. I make a great point of this, having often seen this useful impression effectually prevented by a multitude of subsidiary histories, and explanations, which too much supersede the use of the original text.

"Only observe," continued he, "what divine sentiments, what holy precepts, what devout ejaculations, what strokes of self-abasement, what flights of gratitude, what transports of praise, what

touches of penitential sorrow, are found comprised in some one short sentence woven into almost every part of the historical scriptures! observe this, and then confess what a pity it is that children should be commonly set to read the history in a meagre abridgement, stripped of those gems with which the original is so richly inlaid! These histories and expositions become very useful afterwards to young people who are thoroughly conversant with the Bible itself."

Sir John observed that he had been struck with the remarkable *disinterestedness* of Mr. Stanley's daughters, and their indifference to things about which most children were so eager. "Selfishness," said Mr. Stanley, "is the hydra we are perpetually combating; but the monster has so much vitality, that new heads spring up as fast as the old ones are cut off. *To counteract selfishness, that inborn, inbred mischief, I hold to be the great art of education.* Education, therefore, cannot be adequately carried on, except by those who are deeply convinced of the doctrine of human corruption. This evil principle, as it shews itself early, must be early lopped, or the rapid shootes it makes will as your favourite Eve observes,

"Soon mock our scant manuring."

"This counteraction," continued Mr. Stanley, is not like an art or a science, which is to be taken up at set times, and laid aside till the allotted period of instruction returns; but as the evil shews itself at all times, and in all shapes, the *whole force* of instruction is to be bent against it. Mrs. Stanley and I endeavour that not one reward we bestow, not one gratification we afford, shall be co-

culated to promote it. Gratifications children ought to have. The appetites and inclinations should be reasonably indulged. We only are cautious not to employ them as *the intruments of recompence*, which would look as if we valued them highly, and thought them a fit remuneration for merit. I would rather shew a little indulgence to sensuality *as* sensuality, than make it the reward of goodness, which seems to be the common way. While I indulged the appetite of a child, I would never hold out that indulgence which I granted to the lowest, the animal part of his nature, as a payment for the exertion of his mental or moral faculties."

"You have one great advantage," said Sir John, "and I thank God it is the same in Cavendish-square, that you and Mrs. Stanley draw evenly together. Nothing impedes domestic regulations so effectually as where parents, from difference of sentiment, ill-humour, or bad judgment, obstruct each other's plans, or where one parent makes the other insignificant in the eyes of their children."

"Mr. Reynolds," replied Mr. Stanley, "a friend of mine in the neighbourhood, is in this very predicament. To the mother's weakness the father's temperate discipline seems cruelty. She is perpetually blaming him before the children for setting them to their books. Her attentions are divided between their health, which is perfect, and their pleasure, which is obstructed by her foolish zeal to promote it, far more than by his prudent restrictions. Whatever the father helps them to at table, the mother takes from them, lest it should make them sick. What he forbids is always the

very thing which is good for them. She is much more afraid however of over-loading their memories than their stomachs. Reading, she says, will spoil the girl's eyes, stooping to write will ruin their chests, and working will make them round shouldered. If the boys run, they will have fevers; if they jump, they will sprain their ancles; if they play at cricket, a blow may kill them; if they swim, they will be drowned, the shallowness of the stream is no argument of safety.

"Poor Reynolds' life is one continued struggle between his sense of duty to his children, and his complaisance to his wife. If he carries his point it is at the expence of his peace; if he relaxes, as he commonly does, his children are the victims. He is at length brought to submit his excellent judgment to her feeble mind, lest his opposition should hurt her health; and he has the mortification of seeing his children trained as if they had nothing but bodies.

"To the wretched education of Mrs. Reynolds herself all this mischief may be attributed; for she is not a bad, though an ignorant woman; and having been harshly treated by her own parents, she fell into the vulgar error of vulgar minds, that of supposing the opposite of wrong must necessarily be right. As she found that being perpetually contradicted had made herself miserable, she concluded that never being contradicted at all would make her children happy. The event has answered as might have been foreseen. Never was a more discontented, disagreeing, troublesome family. The gratification of one want instantly creates a new one. And it is only when they are quite

worn out with having done nothing, that they take refuge in their books, as less wearisome than idleness."

Sir John, turning to Lady Belfield, said in a very tender tone, "my dear Caroline, this story, in its principal feature, does not apply to us. We concur compleatly, it is true, but I fear we concur by being both wrong; we both err by excessive indulgence. As to the case in point, while children are young, they may perhaps lean to the parent who spoils them, but I have never yet seen an instance of young persons, where the parents differed, who did not afterwards discover a much stronger affection for the one, who had reasonably restrained them, than for the other, whose blind indulgence had at once diminished her importance and their own reverence."

I observed to Mr. Stanley, that as he had so noble a library, and wished to inspire his children with the love of literature, I was surprised to see their apartment so slenderly provided with books.

"This is the age of excess in every thing," replied he; nothing is a gratification of which the want has not been previously felt. The wishes of children are all so anticipated, that they never experience the pleasure excited by wanting and waiting. Of their initiatory books they must have a pretty copious supply. But as to books of entertainment or instruction of a higher kind, I never allow them to possess one of their own, till they have attentively read and improved by it; this gives them a kind of title to it; and that desire of property so natural to human creatures, I think stimulates them in dispatching books which are in them-

selves a little dry. Expectation with them as with men quickens desire, while possession deadens it."

By this time the children had exhausted all the refreshments set before them, and had retreated to a little farther distance, where, without disturbing us, they freely enjoyed their innocent gambols—playing, singing, laughing, dancing, reciting verses, trying which could puzzle the other in the names of plants, of which they pulled single leaves to increase the difficulty, all succeeded each other. Lady Belfield looking consciously at me. said, "these are the creatures whom I foolishly suspected of being made miserable by restraint, and gloomy through want of indulgence."

"After long experience," said Mr. Stanley, "I will venture to pronounce, that not all the anxious cutting out of pleasure, not all the costly indulgences which wealth can procure, not all the contrivances of inventive man for his darling youthful offspring, can find out an amusement so pure, so natural, so cheap, so rational, so healthful, I had almost said so religious, as that unbought pleasure connected with a garden."

Kate and Celia, who had for some time been peeping into the bower, in order to catch an interval in the conversation, as soon as they found our attention disengaged, stole in among us, each took the fond father by a hand, and led him to the turf seat. Phœbe presented him a book which he opened, and out of it read with infinite humour, grace and gaiety, THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN. This it seems was a pleasure to which they had been led to look forward for some time, but which, in honour of Kate, had been purposely with-

held till this memorable day. His little auditors, who grouped themselves around him on the grass, were nearly convulsed with laughter, nor were the tenants of the bower much less delighted.

As we walked into the house, Mr. Stanley said, "whenever I read to my children a light and gay composition, which I often do, I generally take care it shall be the work of some valuable author, to whose writings this shall be a pleasant and a tempting prelude. What child of spirit who hears John Gilpin will not long to be thought old and wise enough to read the "Task?" The remembrance of the infant rapture will give a predilection for the poet. Desiring to keep their standard high, I accustom them to none but good writers, in every sense of the word; by this means they will be less likely to stoop to ordinary ones when they shall hereafter come to chuse for themselves."

Lady Belfield regretted to me that she had not brought some of her children to the Grove: "to confess a disgraceful truth," said she, "I was afraid they would have been moped to death; and to confess another truth still more disgraceful to my own authority, my indulgence has been so injudicious, and I have maintained so little control, that I durst not bring some of them, for fear of putting the rest out of humour; I am now in a school, where I trust I may learn to acquire firmness, without any dimunition of fondness."

CHAP. XXVI.

THE next morning Mr. Stanley proposed that we should pay a visit to some of his neighbours. He and Sir John Belfield rode on horseback, and I had the honour of attending the ladies in the sociable. Lady Belfield, who was now become desirous of improving on her own too relaxed domestic system, by the experience of Mrs. Stanley, told her how much she admired the cheerful obedience of her children. She said, "she did not so much wonder to see them so good, but she owned she was surprised to see them so happy."

"I know not," replied Mrs. Stanley, "whether the increased insubordination of children is owing to the new school of philosophy and politics, but it seems to me to make part of the system. When I go sometimes to stay with a friend in town to do business, she is always making apologies that she cannot go out with me—'her daughters want the coach.'—If I ask leave to see the friends who call on me in such a room,—'her daughters have company there, or they want the room for their music, or it is preparing for the children's ball in the evening.'—If a messenger is required,—'her daughters want the footman.' There certainly prevails a spirit of independence, a revolutionary spirit, a separation from the parent state. IT IS THE CHILDREN'S WORLD."

"You remind me, Madam," said I, "of an old courtier who being asked by Louis XV. which age

he preferred, his own or the present, replied, 'Sire, I passed my youth in respecting old age. and I find I must now pass my old age in respecting children.'"

"In some other houses," said Mrs. Stanley, "where we visit, besides that of poor Mr. Reynolds, the children seem to have all the accommodations; and I have observed that the convenience and comfort of the father is but a subordinate consideration. The respectful terms of address are nearly banished from the vocabulary of children, and the somewhat too orderly manner which once prevailed is superseded by an incivility, a roughness, a want of attention, which is surely not better than the harmless formality which it has driven out."

Just as she had said this, we stopt at Mrs. Reynolds' gate; neither he nor his lady were at home. Mr. Stanley, who wished to shew us a fine reach of the river from the drawing-room window, desired the servant to shew us into it. There we beheld a curious illustration of what we had heard. In the amplebow-window lay a confused heap of the glittering spoils of the most expensive toys. Before the rich silk chairs knelt two of the children, in the act of rapidly demolishing their fine painted play-things; "others apart sat on *the floor* retired," and more deliberately employed in picking to pieces their little gaudy works of art. A pretty girl who had a beautiful wax doll on her lap, almost as big as herself, was pulling out its eyes, that she might see how they were put in. Another, weary of this costly baby, was making a little doll of rags. A turbulent looking boy was tearing out the parch-

ment from a handsome new drum, that he might see, as he told us, where the noise came from. These I forgave, they had meaning in their mischief.

Another, having kicked about a whole little gilt library, was sitting, with the decorated pages torn asunder at his feet, reading a little dirty penny book, which the kitchen maid had bought of a hawker at the door. The Persian carpet was strewed with the broken limbs of a painted horse, almost as large as a poney, while the discontented little master was riding astride on a long rough stick. A bigger boy, after having broken the pannels of a fine gilt coach, we saw afterwards in the court-yard, nailing together a few dirty bits of ragged elm boards, to make himself a wheel-barrow.

"Not only the disciple of the fastidious Jean Jacques," exclaimed I, "but the sound votary of truth and reason, must triumph at such an instance of the satiety of riches, and the weariness of ignorance and idleness. One such practical instance of the insufficiency of affluence to *bestow* the pleasures which industy must *buy*;—one such actual exemplification of the folly of supposing that injudicious profusion and mistaken fondness can supply that pleasure which must be worked out before it can be enjoyed, is worth a whole folio of argument or exhortation."—The ill-bred little flock paid no attention to us, and only returned a rude 'n—o' or 'ye—s' to our questions."

"Caroline," said Sir John, "these painted ruins afford a good lesson for us. We must desire our rich uncles and our generous god-mothers to make an alteration in their presents, if they cannot be prevailed upon to withhold them."

"It is a sad mistake," said Mr. Stanley, "to suppose that youth wants to be so incessantly amused. They want not pleasures to be chalked out for them. Lay a few cheap and course materials in their way, and let their own busy inventions be suffered to work. They have abundant pleasure in the mere freshness and novelty of life, its unbroken health, its elastic spirit, its versatile temper, and its ever-new resources."

"So it appears, Stanley," said Sir John, "when I look at your little group of girls, recluses as they are called. How many cheap yet lively pleasures do they seem to enjoy!—their successive occupations, their books, their animating exercise, their charitable rounds, their ardent friendships, the social table, at which the elder ones are companions, not mutes; the ever-varying pleasures of their garden,

"Increasing virtue and approving heaven."

While we were sitting with Lady Aston, on whom we next called, Mr. Stanley suddenly exclaimed, "The Miss Flams are coming up the gravel walk!" Lady Aston looked vexed, but correcting herself said, "Mr. Stanley, we owe this visit to you, or rather to your friend," bowing to me; "they saw your carriage stop here, or they would not have done so dull a thing as to have called on me."

These new guests presented a new scene, very uncongenial to the timid and tranquil spirit of the amiable hostess. There seemed to be a contest between the sisters, who should be most eloquent,

most loud, or most inquisitive. They eagerly attacked me all at once, as supposing me to be overflowing with intelligence from the metropolis, a place which they not only believed to contain exclusively all that was worth seeing, but all that was worth hearing. The rest of the world they considered as a barren wilderness, of which the hungry inhabitants could only be kept from starving, by such meagre aliment as the occasional reports of its pleasures, fashions, and anecdotes, which might now and then be conveyed by some stray traveller, might furnish.

"It is so strange to us," said Miss Bell, "and so monstrously dull and vulgar, to be in the country at this time of the year, that we don't know what to do with ourselves."

"As to the time of year, Madam," said I, "if ever one would wish to be in the country at all, surely this month is the point of perfection. The only immoral thing with which I could ever charge our excellent Sovereign is, that he was born in June, and has thus furnished his fashionable subjects with a loyal pretence for encountering 'the sin and sea-coal of London,' to borrow Will Honeycomb's phrase, in the finest month of the twelve. But where that is the real motive with one, it is the pretence of a thousand."

"How can you be so shocking?" said she, "but papa is really grown so cross and so stingy, as to prevent our going to town at all these last two or three years; and for so mean a reason that I am ashamed to tell you." Out of politeness I did not press to know; I needed not, for she was resolved I should not 'burst in ignorance.'

She went on—"Do you know he pretends that times are hard, and public difficulties increasing; and he declares that whatever privations we endure, government must be supported: so that he says, it is right to draw in, in the only way in which he can do it honestly; I am sure it is not doing it creditably. Did you ever hear any thing so shabby?" "Shabby Madam," replied I; "I honour a gentleman who has integrity enough to do a right thing, and good sense enough not to be ashamed to own it."

"Yes, but papa need not. The steward declares, if he would only raise his tenants a very little, he would have more than enough; but papa is inflexible. He says my brother must do as he pleases when he comes to the estate, but that he himself promised when he came into possession, that he would never raise the rents, and that he will never be worse than his word." As I could not find in my heart to join in abusing a gentleman for resolving never to be worse than his word, I was silent.

She then inquired with more seriousness, if there were any prospect of peace. I was better pleased with this question, as it implied more anxiety for the lives of her fellow-creatures, than I had given her credit for. "I am anxiously looking into all the papers," continued she, without giving me time to speak, "because as soon as there is peace, papa has promised we shall go to town again. If it was not for that I should not care if there was war till doomsday, for what with marching regiments, and militia, and volunteers, nothing can be pleasanter than it makes the country, I mean as far as the country *can* be, pleasant." They

then ran over the names and respective merits of every opera singer, every dancer, and every actor, with incredible volubility; and I believe they were not a little shocked at my slender acquaintance with the nomenclature, and the little interest I took in the criticisms they built upon it.

Poor Lady Aston looked oppressed and fatigued, but inwardly rejoiced, as she afterwards owned to me, that her daughters were not within hearing. I was of a different opinion, upon the Spartan principle of making their children sober, by the spectacle of the intoxicated Helots. Miss Bell's eloquence seemed to make but little impression on Sir George; or rather it produced an effect directly contrary to admiration. His good taste seemed to revolt at her flippancy. Every time I see this young man he rises in my esteem. His ingenuous temper and engaging modesty set off to advantage a very fair understanding.

In our way home, we were accosted by Mr. Flam. After a rough but hearty salutation, and a cordial invitation to come and dine with him, he gallopped off, being engaged on business. "This is an honest country 'squire of the old cut," said Mr. Stanley afterwards. "He has a very good estate, which he has so much delight in managing, that he has no pleasure in any thing else. He was prevailed on by his father to marry his present wife, for no other reason than because her estate joined to his, and broke in a little on the *arrondissement*; but it was judged that both being united, all might be brought within a ring fence. This was thought a reason sufficiently powerful for the union of two immortal beings, whose happiness

here and hereafter might be impeded or promoted by it! The felicity of the connection has been in exact proportion to the purity of the motive.

I could not forbear interrupting Mr. Stanley, by observing that nothing had surprised or hurt me more in the little observation I had made on the subject of marriage, than the frequent indifference of parents to the moral, and especially to the religious character of the man who proposed himself. That family fortune and connections should have their full share in the business, I really admit," added I, "but that it should ever form the chief, often the only ground of acceptance, has, I confess, lowered mankind in my esteem more completely, than almost any other instance of ambition, avarice, or worldliness. That a very young girl, who has not been carefully educated, should be captivated by personal advantages, and even infatuated by splendour, is less surprising, than that parents, who having themselves experienced the insufficiency of riches to happiness—that they should be eagerly impatient to part from a beloved daughter, reared with fondness at least, if not with wisdom, to a man of whose principles they have any doubt, and of whose mind they have a mean opinion, is a thing I cannot understand. And yet what proposal almost is rejected on this ground?" Lucilla's eyes at this moment shone with such expressive brightness, that I exultingly said to myself, "Lord Staunton! I defy thee!"

"The mischief of this lax principle is of wide extent," replied Mr. Stanley. "When girls are continually hearing what an advantageous, what a desirable marriage such a young friend has made,

with a man so rich, so splendid, so great; though they have been accustomed to hear this very man condemned for his profligacy perhaps, at least they know him to be destitute of piety—when they hear that these things are not considered as any great objection to the union, what opinion must these girls form, not only of the maxims by which the world is governed, but of the truth of that religion which those persons profess?

"But to return to Mr. Flam. He passed through the usual course of education, but has profited so little by it, that though he has a certain natural shrewdness in his understanding, I believe he has scarcely read a book these twenty years, except Burn's justice and 'The Agricultural Reports.' Yet when he wants to make a figure, he now and then lards his discourse with a scrap of thread-bare Latin which he used to steal in his school-boy exercises. He values himself on his integrity, and is not destitute of benevolence. These, he says, are the sum and substance of religion; and though I combat this mistaken notion as often as he puts it in my power, yet I must say that some who make more profession would do well to be as careful in these points. He often contrasts himself with his old friend Ned Tyrrel, and is proud of shewing how much better a man he is without religion, than Ned is with all his pretensions to it. It is by thus comparing ourselves with worse men, that we grow vain, and with more fortunate men, that we become discontented.

"All the concern he gives himself about his wife and daughter is, that they shall not run him in debt; and indeed he is so liberal, that he does

not drive them to the necessity. In every thing else, they follow their own devices. They teazed him, however, to let them spend two or three winters in town, the mother hinting *that it would answer*. He was prevailed on to try it as a speculation, but the experiment failed. He now insists that they shall go no more till the times mend, to any of the advertising places, such as London, Brighton, or Bath; he says, that attending so many fares and markets is very expensive, especially as the girls don't go off. He will now see what can be done by private contract at home, without the cost of journies, with fresh keep and trimming, and docking into the bargain. They must now take their chance among country dealers; and provided they will give him a son-in-law, whose estate is free from incumbrances, who pays his debts, lives within his income, does not rack his tenants, never drinks claret, hates the French, and loves field sports, he will ask no more questions."

I could not but observe, how preferable the father's conduct, with all its faults, was to that of the rest of the family. "I had imagined," said I, "that this coarse character was quite out of print. Though it is religiously bad, and of course morally defective, yet it is so politically valuable, that I should not be sorry to see a new edition of these obsolete squires, somewhat corrected, and better lettered."

"All his good qualities," said Mr. Stanley, "for want of religion have a flaw in them. His good nature is so little directed by judgment, that while it serves the individual, it injures the public. As a brother magistrate, I am obliged to act

in almost constant opposition to him, and his indiscretions do more mischief by being of a nature to increase his popularity. He is fully persuaded that occasional intoxication is the best reward for habitual industry; and insists that it is good old English kindness, to make the church ringers periodically tipsey at the holidays, though their families starve for it the whole week. He and I have a regular contest at the annual village fairs, because he insists that my refusing to let them begin on a Sunday is abridging their few rights, and robbing them of a day which they might add to their pleasure, without injury to their profit. He allows all the strolling players, mountebanks, and jugglers to exhibit, because, he says, it is a charity. His charity however is so short sighted, that he does not see, that while these vagabonds are supplying the wants of the day, their improvident habits suffer them to look no farther. That his own workmen are spending their hard-earned money in these illegal diversions, while the expence is the least mischief which their daughters incur."

Our next visit was to Mr. Carlton, whom I had found, in one or two previous interviews, to be a man of excellent sense, and a perfect gentleman. Sir John renewed with pleasure his acquaintance with the husband, while Lady Belfield was charmed to be introduced to the wife, with whose character she was so enamoured, and whose gentle manners were calculated to confirm the affection which her little history had inspired.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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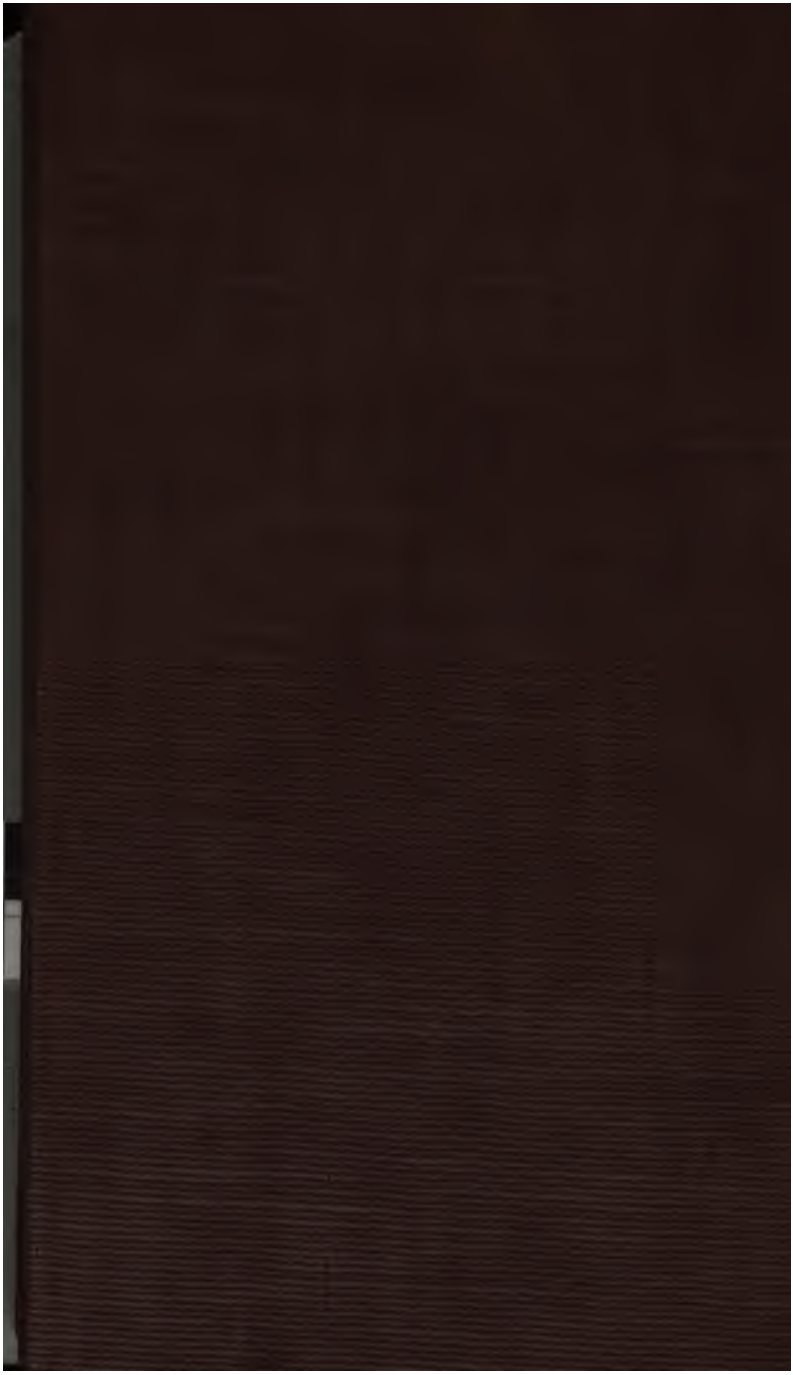
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